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Angola-Saxon Attitudes

Unpaid guerrilla fighters in the Rhodesian bush cannot look forward to much in the way of a trial if they fall into the hands of the other side. Nor if it comes to that can the villagers who shelter them, and nor could the soldiers of the MPLA during their long struggle against the Portuguese colonial power. If 'Callan' and his unsavoury friends had been shot out of hand – their own favoured method of conflict resolution – then at least no question of double standards would have arisen. But the People's Republic of Angola has decided to proceed by judicial standards, and it is by those standards that it must be judged. Instead of the rough justice of combat, which could have left these men filling some corner of a foreign field with nobody to mourn them, we have had the spectacle of a full-dress trial.

There will, of course, be entirely meretricious criticisms and condemnations from those who hoped that Angola could become another Congo: tribally divided and a prey to foreign interest. The frantic lobbyists who teamed up with Pretoria in an attempt to forestall the MPLA, and prolonged the misery of Angola even further, are in no position to be righteous about 'show trials'. They have left deep gashes on the face of the country, and made it that much harder for Angola to break from its past. Now that the true character of their 'partisan fighters' stands revealed, they might preserve a proper reticence. But there is a slim chance of that from the people who are even now urging a deal with Smith, and even now preparing to recruit mercenaries for his depleted ranks. They may feel that the degeneration of Angola into yet another one-party post-colonial state is evidence for their view, but it was precisely the vicious character of their intervention that made such an outcome more likely. The remarks of Mr Maudling – who has voted for capital punishment in Britain on several occasions – reveal the same hypocrisy.

It might have been worse. Even fairly cynical observers awarded points to the Luanda courts for the conduct of the trial. There has been no allegation of maltreatment of the defendants while in custody – itself a refreshing change from the norm in Russia, Spain or Iran. But clearly a higher value was set by the court on propaganda and on deterrence than is consistent with a 'fair trial'. The point, however, is not that it might have been worse but that it need not have happened at all. If the war in question, and the side of the war taken, had been embarrassing to the British Government or to any of its important allies, who can doubt that the Foreign Enlistment Act would have been deployed, as it was deployed against those wishing to take the side of the Republic in the Spanish Civil War? There are still some ugly unanswered questions to be dealt with about the relative ease with which men (some of whom claim that they did not even need passports) were allowed to board planes and leave on their repugnant and disastrous mission. If the right to swing an arm ends at the tip of another man's nose, it is hardly an infringement of freedom to prohibit spoiled soldiers from killing Africans for money.

More important yet, how can Britain be taken seriously as a mediator in Central and Southern Africa if her only contribution to the birth of a nation was to permit psychopathic elements to go there and kill? When Dr Kissinger was losing his composure over Angola and making alliances with Mr Vorster, the laissez-faire policy of Mr Callaghan and the Foreign Office looked reasonable by comparison. But it can now be seen as a colossal error of judgment, which did Britain's name great harm in the eyes of millions of Africans. It has, regrettably, probably already undermined Mr Callaghan's mercy plea. But it may not be too late to repair the damage. First, the Attorney-General should set the wheels of prosecution in motion for those mercenaries who have returned. This should be done as a matter of course, and would have the added advantage of preventing further freebooters from trying their luck in Rhodesia. Finally, it would demonstrate even at this late hour that British Labour governments do not regard Africa as a sort of game reserve with no closed season. Due process in Angola may be inevitably tinged with revenge. In Britain, it would be an overdue restitution for past mistakes.

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Spotlight on Politics

James Fenton

This Is Serious

People have been taking me aside and saying – look, why aren't you just a little more serious? And I have given my word that I shall do my best. From now on, there shall be no more jokes in this column, no more scurrility, no more lies, no more flippancy. The absorbing but trivial details of everyday life in Westminster, the 'human interest' element, is going to be ruthlessly expunged. I am not going to mention, as if I ever would have, the name of the man who was slow-bowling wine-glasses from the terrace of the Commons into the river below. Nor shall I say who it was who came up to me on Tuesday night and said: 'All right then, where are the hedgehogs? I'm feeling frisky again.' Nor shall I publish the material I have been collecting on just what goes on in the various ladies' rooms of the Palace of Westminster – who zips up whom, what they talk about, what they're like underneath. *There's going to be no more locker-room smut.*

It saddens me to say this, since the results are going to be painful for both of us. Like Ruskin (q.v. page 22) I am afraid if I remove the harlequin's mask you will see the face of the tortured madman underneath. It is unfair, too, since I very rarely invent anything, very rarely lie. I did not invent the row over whether John Pardoe wears a hairpiece, nor the scene in the crucial division on the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill, when Jeremy Thorpe chased Pardoe and David Steel, around the Chamber, and tried to pull their hair (Pardoe escaped nimbly, Steel finally succumbed). Nor did I invent the moment in Eric Varley's speech, when a curious figure in a cream suit stood up and demanded a statement on the catering strike. The strike had only been going for ten minutes or so, but this was too much for Peter Bottomley, the victor of Woolwich, who, had he just received the news of Sarajevo, could scarcely have looked more alarmed.

The spirit of seriousness, then, which I shall adopt, must be congruent with the seriousness of the House itself. And this, to a certain extent, lets one off the hook. For while there is no trace in the Commons of any Ciceronian *gravitas*, the word seriousness does have a technical, parliamentary meaning. It was given this meaning by Harold Wilson, who, every time he was being jeered for some monstrous equivocation, would point to the Opposition and say: 'Look at them, they are laughing at sterling, they are joking about unemployment,' or whatever the issue was; 'Do they not realise that these are serious matters?' Callaghan has learnt this usage of the word: seriousness means a cover-up, it is whitewash, and the appeal to seriousness is the surest sign of the evasion of an issue.

The present situation in Westminster is serious. That is evident. The composition of the House is such that, from day to day, from week to week, anything can happen. The Government has lost about a month's worth of parliamentary time, and is still forced to throw more time away (as they did on Monday night), and to make concessions to the Opposition and the minority parties (as they did on Tuesday). By my reckoning there are still 27 Government Bills in the pipeline. One of these, the Finance Bill, *has* to be got through, and indeed – despite all the argy-bargy – Finance Bills always do get through in the end. There are four more Bills which the Opposition would like to destroy. These are the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries, the Dock Work Regulation, the Health Services (pay beds) and the Education Bills. But there are also several days which are committed in advance (such as supply days) and debates such as the foreign affairs and adjournment debates which have to take place before the end of the session. If you assumed that the session ended in the first week of August, and subtracted the amount of time needed for normal business, you would arrive at a figure of something like two or three days for the remainder of government legislation.

So the session will have to be extended. But how, and when? We may rule out September, for the following reasons: there are conferences (TUC, Liberals and Labour); the Palace of Westminster itself is committed for other functions; and the Speaker himself will be presiding over an international Speakers' jamboree, in which Speakers from all over the world will be converging on the Mother of Parliaments. August would be possible, but very unpopular because of school holidays, and all those prepaid package tours which have been losing their value over the last months. But August alone would not be enough. Even if guillotines are brought in on each of the contentious Bills, these guillotines take half a day to debate. You might try to introduce a Hybrid or Umbrella Guillotine, to cover the lot of them, but that would require an overall Government majority, which does not seem to be there. So we are left with the session extended to the end of the year.

This is interesting. And it gets more interesting (so stay with me). There are three problems generally associated with the delaying of the Queen's Speech in this way. The first is the Queen herself. She does, after all, have a life of her own, and she tends to have a lot of long-term commitments. But this can be got round by the appointment of a Commission (comprising the remaining respectable members of the royal family) who would be able to open Parliament in her place.

Then there can be terrible snarl-ups if you have to introduce changes in taxation, an emergency Budget or the like. But this problem is not insuperable. The most bizarre hazard associated with extending the session is that all the loony legislation which the dottier members of the House have been nursing through, and which the Government has been ignoring on the grounds that it will never come to fruition, suddenly gets extra time, and there is a danger of a geometrical increase in the work-load. There are still 29 non-Government Bills lurking in the shadows, including William Rees-Davies's Indecent Displays Bill, which I must say – but no, I said there was not going to be any smut.

Assuming that these disadvantages can be circumvented, what are the advantages of extending this session? (This is the interesting bit.) It has to be said that the major advantage is one which would, under normal circumstances, be considered the chief drawback. And that is this. If you extend this session, you *automatically have less time for the next session.*

I beg your pardon?

I thought you might. What I am saying, and what senior and sensible Tories are saying, is that if you allow things to go on as they are now, in this drifting and ineffectual way, you automatically clog up the works in the next session, and make it that bit less likely that the major legislation to which you are committed will get through. There are two major Bills in the next session. The first is on direct elections to the European parliament. This will be a battle, but it is probably one that the Government's European majority wants to win. We would not wish to lag behind our partners in Europe, would we?

The second major piece of legislation is – devolution. This is serious. As you know, the Scots want it. As you may have heard, the Welsh are quite interested as well, not wishing to be left out. It is also said, although I have not seen one convincing argument to this effect, that the English also want it – there is a 'tremendous feeling' for it in the regions. But does Jim Callaghan want it? Does Parliament want it? Will there be a majority for it? Who wants to take responsibility for muzzling Tam Dalyell? Who's in charge of it now? The man in charge is the same man who has allowed the present mare's nest to develop in the Government's programme of legislation. The question is: is Michael Foot serious?

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Alexander Cockburn

The Ford *v.* Reagan Sideshow

It is all very well talking about the 'tense' race between Ford and Reagan for the Republican nomination, but often now it seems to have the allure of that moment when one's favoured horse, with the winner already in the paddock, makes one last gallant effort to avert the humiliation of last place. One secret poll taken last week shows Carter beating Ford in all 50 states, were the November election to be held now. Other polls do not show Reagan to be doing much better in such a presumptive contest.

Just by way of getting the battle for the Republican nomination in perspective I may as well quote from a party platform statement to be presented to this year's convention: 'The party believes that competition is preferable to regulation and that government has a responsibility to seek the removal of unreasonable restraints and barriers to competition, to restore, and where necessary to stimulate, the operation of market forces.' This sturdy expression of basic capitalist tenets was not in fact composed by a Republican but by a committee of Democrats and will be presented to their convention in Madison Square Garden in ten days' time for automatic approval. I don't imagine that there is much in it that would bother either Gerald Ford or Ronald Reagan, though it is conceivable that Ford now regards the word 'regulation' with the same reserve as 'détente' and on principle refuses to let it pass his lips.

The fact of the matter is that a great many Republicans see little to bother them in the political philosophy of Jimmy Carter. A large number of powerful Republican businessmen – bankers, industrialists and the like – have met the fellow and been charmed by his realistic approach to national problems. Henry Ford II issued a near-endorsement of Carter on the same day as Leonard Woodcock, president of the United Auto Workers, pledged his support. Carter has, of course, made some noises about breaking up the oil companies or at least stopping them from dominating other sources of energy such as coal; but he has also expressed his support for de-regulation of the price of natural gas – something the industry has been after for many years and which the Democrats in Congress just managed to stop earlier this year.

It would be foolish to argue that no issue of principle now separates Republicans from Democrats or any of the candidates from each other. Carter has somewhat nervously pledged himself to a 3-per-cent level of unemployment and the possibility of price and wage controls – not the sort of noise made by Republicans this year, who tend to talk exclusively about inflation. But here again Carter never nailed the slogan of jobs to his mast with the same vigour as his rivals earlier this year. He simply has not yet sounded particularly frightening to business.

Perched atop his vast, if insecure, coalition, Carter is already being treated as the President-elect. It is really rather bizarre. Even though four out of every ten Democrats – according to the polls — would have preferred someone else to be their candidate, and even though he has not yet formally received the grace and favour of actual nomination, Carter moves about the country aglow with the aura of impending power. The major political question is whom he will nominate as his vice-president: the short list is pregnant with tactical significance. As a Southerner he has to consolidate his less than tremendous appeal in the West and the North East. Therefore his mate could be any of the following: John Glenn of Ohio, Adlai Stevenson of Illinois, Fritz Mondale of Minnesota, Ed Muskie of Maine, Frank Church of Idaho and Alan Cranston of California. These are the names his staff mention as on the short list. Particularly sapient rune-readers suggest that Ed Muskie,

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a Catholic north easterner, could be the person ultimately nominated in the only surprise that the Democratic convention now has to offer.

Almost as a sideshow, amid such deliberations, the desperate battle of the President of the United States to remain a convincing candidate for his party's favours continues. At present Ford is barely ahead of Reagan. Each weekend brings news of further machinations and bloodshed in Republican assemblies around the country. Sometimes he descends into the relevant battle zone himself; sometimes he sends his wife, who usually fares somewhat better.

Utterly abandoned is the notion that the Republican Party could somehow have produced a candidate without conspicuous public carnage. Supporters of Reagan revile adherents of Ford and vice-versa. Polls show that a significant proportion of each faction would rather vote for Jimmy Carter or stay at home than vote for the Republican alternative. Worse still, a thorough poll last Friday actually showed that it made little difference in the West whether Ford or Reagan was selected. Both, as I have mentioned, would go down to Carter.

Powerful Republicans now argue as follows: if it is true that Ford would lose to Carter in all states in November, then Reagan is evidently the more attractive candidate. He at least might do better (despite the evidence of the polls) in the West, South West and South East. With Reagan they propose John Connally as a running-mate. This duo, the incarnation of the popular theory of the burgeoning power of the 'Southern rim', would at least have some drawing power. The alternative proposed is a Ford-Reagan ticket. The supposition is that Ford at the end of his primary campaign, assuming he promises enough Federal contracts to uncommitted delegates around the country, will not be able to avoid the selection of Reagan as his companion in sorrow. The alternative mentioned for him is also John Connally, although the latter may be satisfied with the promise – admittedly less than inspiring – of a cabinet post.

Thus we have Ford-Reagan or Reagan-Connally. Some optimists, hoping for excitement in a year edging into torpor, suggest that an impasse could produce a compromise. Such a scenario is, of course, much on the mind of Nelson Rockefeller, still dashing about the country making speeches.

So the Republicans confront what most people presently agree will be a débâcle for them in November. Only the more ardent supporters of Ronald Reagan will really be distressed in the actual advent of catastrophe. The followers of Ford will comfortably vote for Carter as their second choice. Alone among the major candidates still extant, Reagan is still only on the margins of a national consensus. East Coast Republicans cannot stand him. He is regarded as dangerously out of control in matters of foreign policy and as threatening as Wallace once was in terms of domestic issues. This is peculiar, since as Governor of California he was in some respects somewhat more liberal than Jerry Brown – which is admittedly not saying very much.

The truth, now being gloomily faced by Republicans, is that the party commands the allegiance of less than a quarter of the voters. In the first election since the end of the war in Vietnam the natural Democratic majority seems about to reassert itself. As an extra irony, the Southern strategy so invoked by Nixon campaigners has now been inherited by Jimmy Carter. The question, therefore, comes down to one of resituating political divisions within the Democratic Party, where Carter's umbrella covers everyone from slum blacks to moderate Republicans.

In the Sixties two presidents found themselves in the same position which Carter now confronts. Both Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon were maintained in office in 1964 and 1972 by enormous majorities. Both subsequently crashed in ruin, destroyed by elements in the coalition which propelled them into office. Right now, the interesting question is not really whether Ford will beat Reagan for the nomination but what sort of a political entity Carter will turn out to be. He is the receptacle of too many contradictory hopes. It is bound to be a chastening experience.

New York

David Haworth

Waiting for Jenkins

When Roy Jenkins comes to the Common Market capital next January to take up the European Commission presidency he will receive a deal of advice, perhaps not wholly welcome, about what the job is. Monsieur le Président is not exactly a premier, he will be told, nor a kind of permanent undersecretary. He *represents* the EEC: a symbol, if you like, but one who works at least as hard as a nationalised industry chairman and receives considerably more money. He must not get ideas above his station because the Community foreign ministers would not take kindly to that. He will also be reminded of the collegiate nature of the Commission itself – what the British call team work, is it? – and the need to place his 12 commissioner colleagues in the positions which suit them best in the field. Yet he must also be his own man and be seen to be a leader – at once a visionary and a functionary – upholding the, er, best interests of Europe.

At least one assumes it will be Jenkins who has his ear bent in this way. The summit meeting later this month is expected to confirm him as Britain's nominee. Meanwhile there seems to be only one person here who is not entirely convinced Jenkins is the man, but then George Thomson has very good self-interested reasons to suggest the choice may not yet have been finally made.

Be that as it may, whoever is chosen is bound to be the victim of exaggerated expectations – just as the effect of Britain's entry on the EEC was exaggerated by the well-meaning on the Continent. This is already beginning to happen: Jenkins is more highly regarded in this city than ever he has been in London. He is seen as little less than a political genius, and a moral giant as well as a man for all seasons. Apart from this contradiction, the sheer scale of his appeal is odd because it is almost impossible to find anyone in EEC circles who has ever met the man or knows anything about his political career except, of course, his role during the referendum campaign.

The present Commission has all but collapsed; a combination of illness (Borschette) and political ambition elsewhere (Spinelli and Simonet) has thinned its ranks to the point where Ortoli is even worried about whether he will get a quorum each Wednesday. Inevitably there is a slackening in a commission's performance as it nears the end of its term of office, and many of its members realise their time here is running out. But this year the process has started a full six months before the normal change round and has had a dispiriting effect on morale.

As things stand, only one commissioner seems certain to be renominated – the steely yet passionate Dane, Finn Olav Gundelach. The only significance about whether a few members of the present crew remain is the degree to which that diminishes the member governments' options in nominating an entirely new team. With the exception of Gundelach, my own view is that all the present commissioners should be ditched and a fresh start made. Did the prime ministers agree at their last, and otherwise completely abortive, summit meeting that the next Commission should be strongly political and composed of acknowledged statesmen? At the time it seemed clear enough that an understanding along these lines had indeed been reached. Since then doubts have been raised – which suggests there may be second thoughts in some administrations. However, Chancellor Schmidt and the Dutch are still firmly in favour and their ideas follow closely the suggestion in the Tindemans report on European union that the Nine should jointly appoint a president and then allow him a consultative role in the selection of his colleagues.

Over lunch last week one commissioner, whose own future is a question mark, said he was quite sure that Jenkins had already started to take soundings, as the saying goes. Certainly many people have been making it their business to contact him: there has been no shortage of letters and long-distance calls from those who would not ordinarily have been in touch with the British Home Secretary. Well, it's not quite what Tindemans had in mind but it may be useful in the elimination process.

No one, however, seems to have thought through exactly what they would expect a more *political* Commission would do or how it would function either in relation to the

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EEC Council of Ministers or the European Parliament. Of greater importance still, the Commission is totally unprepared to meet the inevitable challenge to its authority which will be posed by a directly elected European Parliament, an institution which it may safely be assumed will be launched two years from now.

The recent maladroit attempt by the British Conservative group in the European Commission to unseat the Commission gives no clue to the real weight that a directly elected assembly might deploy against a Commission it feels is failing or misguided. Once the Parliament, hitherto an elegant display case for faded political reputations, is given more power it will also take more power, and a proper tension could develop between the three EEC institutions – as was intended by the Treaty of Rome. Directly elected parliamentarians will want to take far more initiatives than have been possible in the past and a function which was the most exclusive preserve of the European Commission will have to be shared after the summer of 1978.

No one knows the Jenkins view of this. No doubt a series of well-orchestrated leaks between now and the end of the year will give us some clues. But it seems to me – the Tindemans Report notwithstanding – that he may choose to fashion the Commission into a more hard-headed executive body than it is at present, one which will truly fulfil the functions of a civil service in relation to the Parliament or the Council. Alternatively, he could encourage the political ambitions the Commission has sought to develop, with no great success, in recent years. Once installed on the 13th floor of the Berlaymont building, the choice could be a very personal one. With an initial two-year stint as president, he will not have much time to make up his mind if he wishes to redefine the relationship between the Commission and the other institutions. Of Jenkins's European fervour we have heard a lot – perhaps too much – but to date it has represented a blank sheet, not a blueprint. This is also a strength: to an unprecedented extent Jenkins will have the freedom to do as he chooses.

Whether this will be enough to 'save' the EEC from the morass of procrastination and indecision into which it has fallen must be doubted. In the past, crisis has tended to solve problems: for the past three years it has compounded them. Whatever skills Jenkins has shown in his career would not suggest him as a natural or automatic choice as Commission president. Nor was Ortoli selected on that basis, as his track record has made painfully clear since. Rather, the near unanimity about the Jenkins candidature is born of something different. In the worst of all possible worlds he seemed the best man for the job. There is one other piece of advice he should take to heart when he arrives. Jenkins will have to forget he was ever in the referendum campaign. His new responsibility will be infinitely more complex than to be sustained by that reputation, and in the present circumstances proselytising is something 'Europe' needs like a hole in the head – or another economic crisis.

Brussels

Anthony Mockler

The Trial of the Mercenaries

It must be a harrowing experience at the best of times to attend a mass trial; it is particularly grim when the accused are on trial for their lives. Of all the vivid impressions that the past two weeks have left none has been more vivid and in its ghastly way more impressive than the final rhetorical tirade of the People's Prosecutor, lasting for well over three hours without a break, that culminated with the repeated hammering phrase: 'In the name of the Angolan people, of their history, of their sufferings in the name of Africa, in the name of liberation movements wherever they may be, I demand the pain of death for the accused.'

There are other incidents that stand out from the general jumbled impressions of the past days, lived in a narrow triangle between hotel, courtroom and press centre, an isolated little world on which even the mass demonstration in the streets before the trial opened hardly intruded. '*Morte a os Mercenarios*,' the banners proclaimed and the people of Luanda shouted; but the instinctive fear that it had all been rigged, that it would be nothing but a show trial in the worst tradition was quickly dispelled by the calm, almost serene, benignity of the presiding judge when the trial of the 13 mercenaries opened. Of course there were elements of the theatre about it all, not least the layout of the courtroom itself with its galleries reserved for the press, the populace in the gods, and the pit the rendezvous of progressives from all over the world, ranging from such venerable figures as Wilfred Burchett to comparative newcomers of the stamp of Beatrice Allende, leavened by a fair scattering of bearded young Cubans in jungle kit and *mestizo* glamour girls of the Angolan Revolution.

In this extraordinary setting nothing was more outlandish and at first more totally embarrassing than the unexpected and tardy appearance of four British lawyers, stepping almost straight out of a caricaturist's sketch-book, fortunately less incompetent than they at first appeared. And nothing was more melodramatic than the slow swivelling of the witnesses, who on the judge's instructions turned to face the mercenaries seated behind them and with outstretched arm identified 'Callan' and the others – but invariably Callan.

And then there was the more human side, disconcerting because so totally unexpected, most touchingly exemplified by the obviously growing rapport between Callan – Costas Georgiou – and his tiny *mestizo* defence lawyer Maria Teresinha Lopes, the only person capable of calming him down – though even she failed on that final gruesome morning when he muttered and mouthed and shook his handcuffs at the judge: 'I tell the truth, okay. What you want to know? Ask me straight. Costas, you will tell the truth.'

It was not only Callan, though. In a way the most extraordinary thing about the whole nine days was the way in which the mercenaries, to begin with a mere robot group of names and faces and potted records, gradually became more and more human – and as such more recognisable even by those most hostile to them as fellow human beings. Callan, of course, had always stood out; but by the end his ferocity had become more pathetic than threatening. But the rest, for all that the People's Prosecutor continued to label them 'the scum of consumer society', could be seen almost daily to be gaining both en masse and as individuals the sympathy of the whole courtroom.

There were the three weird Americans, the youngest, Acker, incongruously quoting the Bible in his final appeal for love and human understanding; the hyper-intelligent Argentino-Sicilian Gus Grillo, everybody's image of a *mafioso*, and the loquacious, patriotic Gearhardt, who seemed to think that all he had to do was explain, explain, explain, and all could be forgiven. The British contingent were less coherent, apart from the yappity Fortuin, Banks's bodyguard, and the comic, Captain Grimes-like figure of 'Brummy' Barker who, naked, afraid to swim the River Zaïre, terrified of being shot, claimed to be a *Daily Mirror* reporter and demanded that his captors cable Harold Wilson for confirmation.

But even the dour Mackenzie, a killer by his own admission, won a certain grudging respect for his honesty and – hesitant though one is to use the phrase – his dignity. By the penultimate day, so familiar had these mercenaries become, that there was something not merely distasteful but almost obscene in the presentation of a recording, the sound track of a BBC TV programme, in which the voices of parents, wives, teachers, friends talking about three of them, their personalities and their childhood, home, and love lives, was played to a courtroom that had come to know them as individuals.

Had they been telling the exact truth? Did they loot and rape and kill? Or were they merely, as so many of them claimed, recruited for training or for administration only. As the People's Prosecutor caustically observed: 'There are contradictions here that need to be explained: paratroopers that come out to be PT instructors, medical orderlies who carry guns but no medical equipment.'

In a sense, though, the individual truth hardly matters. For what is certain is that they were a miserable and incompetent bunch, joining a defeated army, with little or no time to commit all the offences of which they have been accused – and when they did kill, as even the prosecution was reduced to complaining, more likely to kill each other or their 'brother soldiers' of the FNLA, in an orgy of lemming-like self-destruction, than the Cuban or MPLA soldiers opposing them.

Objectively, indeed, they appear to have

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done the present government forces little or no harm; they were certainly never a decisive, barely even a delaying, factor in the war on the northern front. And in a sense whatever finally happens to the ten miserable British mercenaries in the dock, whether in fact Georgiou, McKenzie and Barker will be shot, the price has already been paid.

For, in the suitably rhetorical words of the best of the defending British lawyers: 'The bones of nearly one hundred mercenaries lie scattered over northern Angola; and their ghosts will serve as a deterrent.' Biafra destroyed the myth of the invincibility of the white mercenary in black Africa – but in Biafra there was still a hint of glamour about the whole affair. Angola has revealed the mercenary temptation for what it really is – shabby, suicidal and above all ineffective.

Luanda

Geoff Robertson

The Libel Industry

London has become the libel capital of the world. The lavish handouts to Lords Bernstein and Wigg, Telly Savalas, Robert Wagner, Natalie Wood and Princess Elizabeth of Toro serve to underline the absurdity of a form of compensation available only to the wealthy for transient stings which leave no permanent mark. At a time when other countries are abandoning metaphysical valuations of dignity in favour of protecting privacy and encouraging press professionalism, our libel law is serving little purpose beyond inhibiting investigative journalism and lining legal pockets.

Libel trials may provide good courtroom theatre – witness the recent case of the spanking colonel. But they all proceed on the assumption that the law must afford protection from 'words which tend to lower the plaintiff in the estimation of right-thinking members of society'. A relevant belief, perhaps, in an age when social and political life was lived in gentlemen's clubs, when escutcheons could be blotted and society scandals resolved by writs of slander. But in 1976 are we justified in spending scarce legal resources to preserve the sense of dignity of those rich enough to wait years for the hearing, and to gamble massive legal fees on the outcome? Libel has broken down: it is too protracted, too unpredictable, and out of the financial reach of the people who really need its protection. A member of the working class, 'no better than he ought to be', who has his private life rifled and distorted by a Sunday newspaper cannot obtain legal aid to sue. The Law Society will provide only £25 worth of legal 'advice': the solicitor's meter ticks for long enough to inform him that although he may be the victim of a palpable libel, his case may take years to come to court, could be dismissed on a technicality, his private life would be put under a microscope and the legal costs would be many thousands of pounds – cash down.

Libel law has become hideously complex in volume, protracted in length and unpredictable in result. When the Telly Savalas jury avowedly plucked £34,000 out of thin air immediate cries went up for trial by judges alone. But judges have dispensed the same capricious largesse: they heartily approved a £33,000 award to Lord Bernstein and £40,000 to the captain of the ill-fated PQ 17. Judges dislike the press and lean to titled or Establishment litigants, while juries are impressed by showbiz personalities and think that newspapers make large profits. Each case which goes to trial is an elaborate gamble: how much should be paid into court, and when? If the defendant makes a payment, the plaintiff may seize it and call quits. If he presses on and wins, but is awarded less than the payment, he must foot the entire legal bill. When the spanking colonel won a derisory ½p, the *Sunday People* were saddled with costs which could have been avoided by 'paying in' the lowest coin in the realm. But when Dr Dering was awarded his halfpenny he became liable for all legal costs because the publishers of *Exodus* had the foresight to pay in £2. In circumstances like these, the temple of law becomes a casino.

The extension of legal aid for libel would enable the very poor, as well as the very rich, to activate a law which serves a questionable social purpose, in an unsatisfactory fashion. There is need for a process which enjoins the speedy public correction of false statements: the libel law merely offers a balance of money and reputation long after the falsehood has been published. There is need for a procedure to evaluate the truth of defamatory statements, but the adversary system of trial, in which each side exaggerates its own case and history is hamstrung by rules of evidence, is rarely satisfactory. The truth about Dr Dering's activities in Auschwitz cannot be extrapolated from his jury verdict. The evidence which Mr Maudling gave to the Poulson bankruptcy trustee has already been ruled inadmissible in his libel action against Granada. The laws of libel serve neither the needs of the present nor the record of the past. They require radical reappraisal, so that defamatory statements can be swiftly investigated by an independent and respected tribunal which can set the record straight, if need be by ordering a retraction, and compensation if actual damage has been done.

The most recent official report on the libel laws has barely had time to gather dust. In March 1975 a committee chaired by Mr Justice Faulks reported that libel cases were 'unduly long and unnecessarily costly' and that their results 'both as to liability and damages are unpredictable'. But the Faulks committee was top heavy with lawyers – libel lawyers, at that – and its proposals opted for revision rather than reform. It even recommended extension of liability to defamation of the dead, and rejected Lord Shawcross's recent suggestion that newspapers should be protected from suits on matters of public interest where all reasonable care had been taken to establish the truth of the facts stated. This reform, the committee maintained, 'would seriously alter the balance of the law of defamation against the defamed plaintiff. Such a shift is intrinsically undesirable'. Why *intrinsically*? Because the committee failed to study the social consequences of libel law: it looked only at the symmetry of its principles.

There is some hope that the Royal Commission on the Press will show more sympathy for the claims of press freedom. Commission members recently visited Sweden and were reportedly impressed by that country's 'press Ombudsman', who is empowered to investigate allegations of false, derogatory statements, and to order the offending newspaper to publish an appropriate retraction. The Royal Commission may also find itself attracted to American law, which gives ordinary members of the public protection against violation of their private life, but in matters of public concern permits a plaintiff to recover damages only after proof 'with convincing clarity' that the defendant knowingly and deliberately published a lie.

A better balance between the competing claims of press freedom, privacy and personal dignity could be struck by replacing the law of civil libel by an Ombudsman with

Roger Woddis

Nothing Sacred

From his library in Surrey,
Hung with regimental swords,
Came a cry as Colonel Curry
Read the latest news from Lord's.

Turning to a bright vermilion,
He could not believe his eyes:
'Jackets off in the pavilion.'
(Members, though, must still wear ties).

Never looked two cheeks more hollow,
Nor less stiff an upper lip;
What in heaven's name could follow
Gentlemen allowed to strip?

Is this, thought the baffled colonel,
Why we fought the Second War?
Pages from his favourite journal
Slithered to the parquet floor.

Guardsmen swelter in the city,
Gallant typists still survive,
Yet the MCC Committee
Gets run out at 95.

Decent standards melt like butter,
Cricket is becoming crude;
Ah, my friend, and oh! Calcutta!
Soon they'll play it in the nude!

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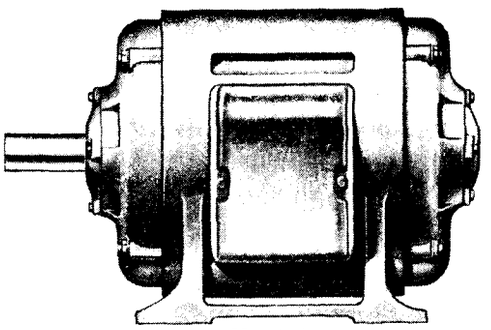
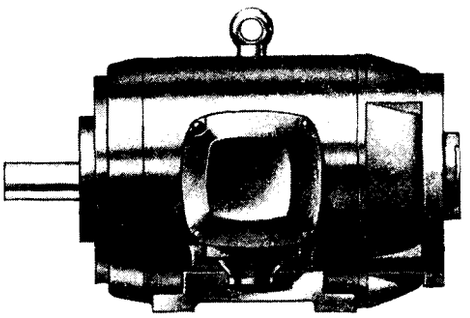
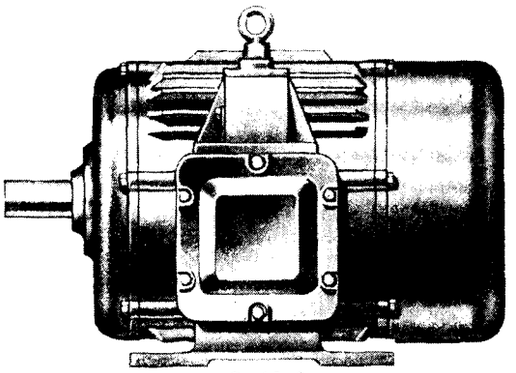


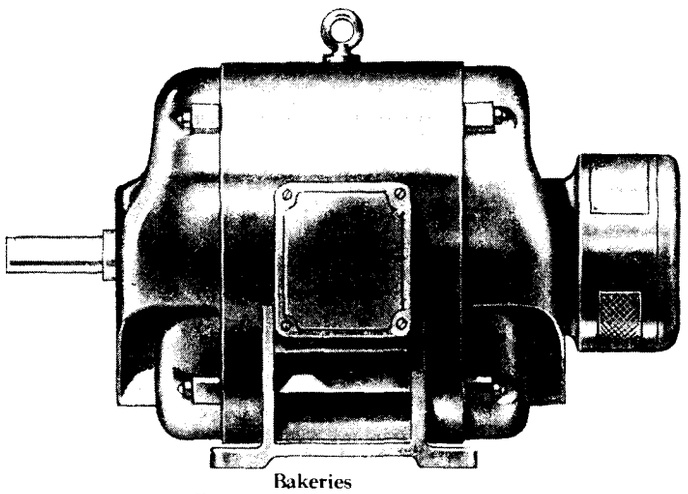
Hospitals
'Silent' electric motors power equipment in those areas where noise is forbidden.



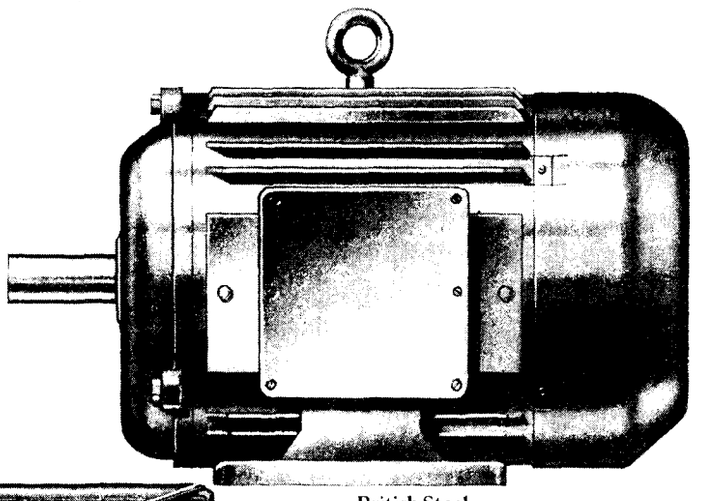
Engineering Industry
A 10kW electric motor powers a typical lathe in a machine shop.



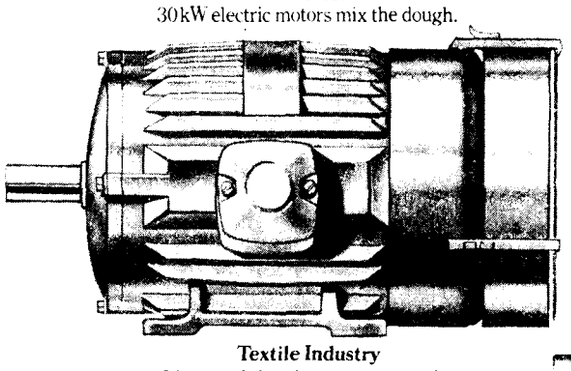
Coal Industry
Flame-proof electric motors pump water out of the mines.



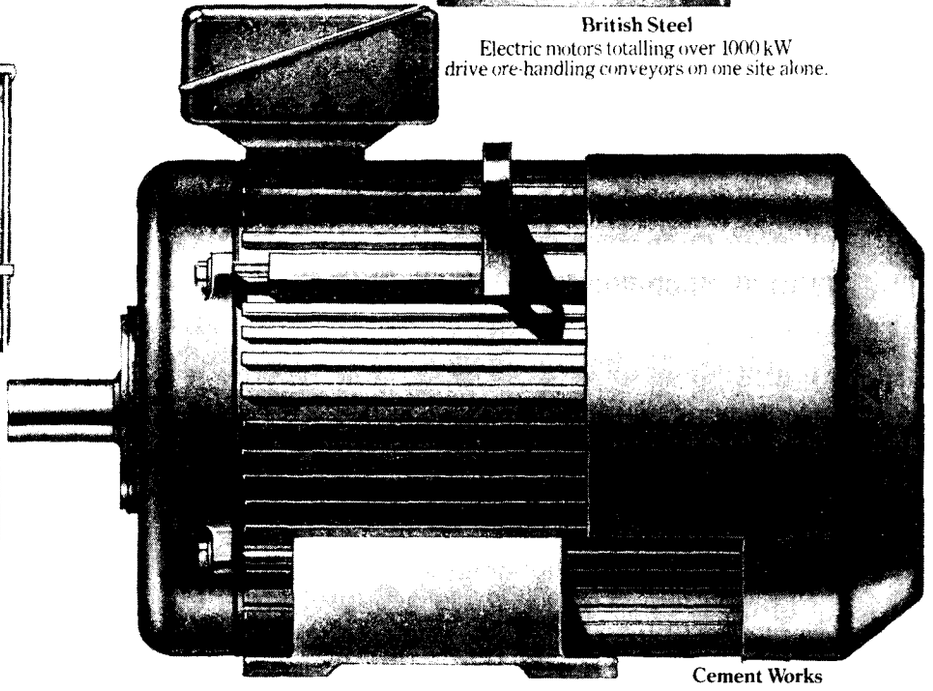
Bakeries
30kW electric motors mix the dough.



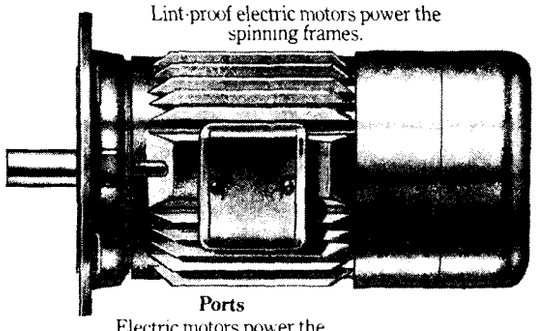
British Steel
Electric motors totalling over 1000kW drive ore-handling conveyors on one site alone.



Textile Industry
Lint-proof electric motors power the spinning frames.



Cement Works
Two 575kW dust-proof electric motors rotate a 4000-ton cement kiln.



Ports
Electric motors power the loading cranes.

The Motor Industry.

More than 50% of the electricity consumed by British Industry is used in motive power.

In the docks, in the making of steel, in textiles, in coal.

Nearly everywhere, there's electrical input behind industrial output. Why?

Because it's clean, immediate, efficient, adaptable. And there are very few maintenance costs.

Think, for a moment, of electricity's contribution. On a personal level, it washes your shirts. On a national level, it helps the iron and steel industry and the textile industry combined to export £1,299 million-worth of goods per year.

Exports are this country's life blood.

Electricity helps generate them.

THINKELECTRIC

The Electricity Council, England and Wales.

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the staff and the statutory power to investigate defamatory statements and to order appropriate redress. In most cases this would take the form of a public retraction, given prominence equal to that of the original libel. In rare cases it might mean a fine or suspension for a journalist who has deliberately or recklessly filed inaccurate copy. Publishers could be ordered to pay damages to complainants who have suffered in some measurable way (e.g. by loss of work) from the effect of any false statement. Such a system would provide speedy and certain redress for victims of inaccurate reporting, free journalists from the inhibiting effect of 'gagging' writs and liberate their proprietors from the nuisance of gold-digging claims. A new civil action for invasion of privacy in matters affecting non-public persons would protect the victims of prying and prurience who at present have no remedy at all.

The arguments for abolishing criminal libel have been well rehearsed. Truth is no defence, and the requirement of a tendency to disturb the peace is unacceptably vague as a standard for criminal sanctions. Yet there is scope for an offence of knowingly publishing a deliberate falsehood with the intention of injuring another. A national newspaper editor who publishes as fact, on the eve of a general election, a deliberate lie about a party leader in order to bias the electorate against him deserves to be punished. But as the law stands even an editor who quite innocently publishes a serious libel can be jailed for up to 12 months, at least if his victim is sufficiently wealthy to launch a private prosecution.

Reported libel cases are merely the tip of the iceberg. Commercial considerations usually dictate settlements which avoid prohibitive legal costs, even if this means abandoning an author's belief in the accuracy of his words. Books, scripts and newspaper articles on topical subjects are frequently degutted by libel lawyers who tend to err on the safe side, where they can never be proved wrong. The libel laws offer no protection to the privacy of the ordinary person: they function to confer a tax-free bonus on wealthy public figures. Throw your hat into the ring, and you can collect unearned income whenever it is accidentally trampled. If truth will out, there must be better ways of extracting it.

Donald Gould

Dog Days

The dog days are upon us. Last Friday all the papers carried the story of the 12-year-old girl from Slough, blinded in one eye because of an infection picked up from dog shit. The man who told the tale, the secretary of Slough's Council for Voluntary Service, said, quite simply, 'dogs should be banned'. Two days later the *Sunday Times* Weekly Review kicked off with a panegyric on animals by Dilys Powell (picture of Dilys and hairy friends by Snowdon) telling how she is woken in the morning by 'a persistent furry pressure on my cheek' which soon gives way to 'a stab of cold' as her own little bundle of flea-ridden delight nudges her into wakefulness – 'he stirs and thrusts his iceberg nose full in my face. It is deplorably unhygienic, and I find it an unfailing pleasure'.

So who's right – Dilys Powell or the man from Slough? Should we shoot all the dogs on the grounds that they are a bunch of greedy, dirty, dangerous, good-for-nothing layabouts, or should we cherish them (together with pussies, budgies, hamsters, and all the rest) for the undoubted pleasure they give to millions of pet owners, and the civilising influence they are supposed to exert upon human behaviour?

The Chinese aren't in doubt about the answer. They have banned dogs as pets because dogs eat food needed for people. British dogs and cats have so far got away with it, despite the fact that they swallow at least 1.5 million tons of victuals every year. Some of this is in the form of scraps, for, wallowing in our wealth, we British throw away about a quarter of all the food we cook or process for human consumption, but a good 600,000 tons of food prepared specially for pets is sold here every year, and the annual value of all the food we offer pets is around £400m.

This sum may be compared to the £600m. worth of food 'given' each year by the rich nations as aid to the starving citizens of the third world. In a scarifying article printed in *New Scientist* last March, Dr Robie Fears, a nutritionist, pointed out that people in the poorer countries eat about the same amount of food as a medium-sized British dog, but the dog's diet is of a higher nutritional value.

Dogs and cats no longer eat fresh meat from the knacker's yard and other foodstuffs unfit for human consumption because food hygiene regulations now prevent the trade in such products. Pet foods are prepared from cereals, meat, soya bean meal, sugar, skimmed milk and other high-quality nutrients which could either be eaten by man directly, or which could be used to feed farm animals. In the Americas whole ranches are devoted to the rearing of thousands of horses which are shipped off to the pet-food manufacturers as soon as they have reached full size. Vast quantities of whale meat used to go into pet foods until conservationists campaigned against the practice.

The population of well-fed dogs in the developed world is growing fast. In Britain we harbour an estimated 6 million dogs and 5 million cats, and the dog population is expanding at the rate of 4.4 per cent per annum.

What goes in must come out, and every day British dogs excrete about 1½ million gallons of urine and deposit some 500 tons of faeces, much of it on roads, parks and playgrounds. This large-scale pollution of the human habitat is not only offensive but dangerous. An estimated 12 per cent of all the faeces scattered around contains eggs of the parasite which blinded the girl in Slough. One quarter of 800 soil samples taken from public places throughout the country were also found to contain these eggs, which can stay alive for four years. People get them on their hands, put their hands to their mouths, and the eggs are swallowed. Crawlers and toddlers are at greatest risk.

In the intestines the eggs hatch out in larvae which get into the blood and are carried all over the body. Blindness results when the worms burrow their way into the retina. There is a strong suspicion that the worm, *Toxocara*, may also be a cause, *inter alia*, of asthma and epilepsy, and on occasion it may carry the virus of poliomyelitis to the brain, producing a serious, paralytic form of the disease. About 4 per cent of a group of children living near parks were found to be infected with the worm. The disease is treatable, but first you need to know you've got it.

When rabies comes to Britain (as it will) the nuisance value of cats and dogs will escalate. It is unlikely that many, if any, humans will die from the disease, because of the excellent protection provided by modern anti-rabies vaccines promptly given, but at least 10,000 Britons a year are likely to need injections, and the care-free relationship between people and pets we now enjoy will disappear. In particular, parents will need to worry constantly about contacts between their children and unknown dogs and cats. Dogs can also pass on parasites and germs causing jaundice, kidney disease, liver cysts, and mental deficiency in infants. They spread mites, fleas, ringworm and scabies.

So what's on the credit side? Recently, in one of those impressive pieces of basic research which have made psychologists and sociologists the envied doyens of the academic world, members of an 'experimental group' of old people were each given a budgie. A matched 'control group' were each given a begonia instead. Five months later the budgie owners were judged more cheerful, sociable and uncomplaining than the begonia buffs. Perhaps all their begonias had died.

Pets *do* give a lot of people, including children and the old and the lonely, a great deal of pleasure. But it does seem to be time that we started keeping the creatures in their place. If we are to let free rangers like dogs and cats live among us, we should insist that they are licensed (less than half of British dog owners bother with this small formality). Small dogs, which eat a lot less could be cheaper to license than great hounds. Annual renewal of the licence could be dependent upon a kind of canine MOT test, certifying the beast free of the nastier infections. The fouling of public places could attract stiffer penalties. And perhaps owners could be persuaded to forgo the perilous 'unfailing pleasure of the thrust of an iceberg nose full in the face'.

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ADVERTISER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

JAPAN RATIFIES NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY

Following the approval of the House of Representatives of the Japanese National Diet on April 28, and of the House of Counsellors on May 24, and the subsequent announcement by the Cabinet on June 1 of the decision of the Government of Japan to ratify the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Japanese Ambassador, Mr. Tadao Kato delivered the Japanese Government's instruments of ratification of the Treaty on June 8 to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to be deposited with the British Government. Japan thus became the 100th nation to accede to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Similar instruments of ratification were also deposited in Moscow and Washington.

Welcoming the Japanese ratification, Lord Goronwy-Roberts, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said that Japan's adherence to the Treaty was a highly significant development that would give much support and encouragement to those who are already parties. It was noteworthy that Japan had become the one hundredth party to the Treaty.

Together with the Japanese Government's instruments of ratification of the Treaty, the Japanese Ambassador Mr. T. Kato, handed to the Minister of State, Lord Goronwy-Roberts, the following Statement of the Government of Japan issued on the occasion of the depositing of its instruments of ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Statement of the Government of Japan: 8th June 1976

Today the Government of Japan is depositing its Instruments of Ratification of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons with the Governments of the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States, and Japan becomes a party to this Treaty.

Japan, as the only nation to have suffered atomic bombing, has consistently followed a fundamental policy of forsaking nuclear armament and has steadfastly pursued the foreign policy of a nation committed to peace under its peace constitution. On the occasion of the depositing of its Instruments of Ratification of this Treaty, the Government of Japan declares anew to the world this fundamental policy. It firmly believes that Japan's adherence to this Treaty will contribute to stability in international relations, and, in particular, to peace and stability in Asia.

Japan, as a party to this Treaty, is determined hereafter to intensify its efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to contribute to international cooperation with respect to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

This Treaty permits only the 'nuclear-weapon states' to possess nuclear weapons and allows them a special status. The Government of Japan holds the belief that the nuclear-weapon states must rectify this discrimination in the future by totally abolishing their nuclear weapons. To achieve this end, the Government of Japan is determined to make special efforts for the furthering of nuclear disarmament.

On the basis of these fundamental considerations, the Government of Japan stresses especially the following points:

1. The Government of Japan hopes that as many states as possible, whether possessing a nuclear explosive capability or not, will become parties to this Treaty in order to make it truly effective. In particular, it strongly hopes that the Republic of France and the People's Republic of China, which possess nuclear weapons but are not parties to this Treaty, will accede thereto.

2. The Government of Japan urges the nuclear-weapon states, which have special responsibilities for nuclear disarmament, to take concrete nuclear disarmament measures such as the reduction of nuclear arms and the realization of a comprehensive nuclear test ban, in accordance with Article VI of this Treaty. It urges the nuclear-weapon states not party to this Treaty also to take nuclear disarmament measures.

3. The Government of Japan takes particular note of the Declarations on June 1968 of the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States concerning the security of non-nuclear-weapon states, as well as of Security Council Resolution 255 (1968), and hopes that the nuclear-weapon states will make further efforts towards effective measures for the security of non-nuclear-weapon states. It further urges all states, both nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states, to refrain, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, from the threat or use of force in their international relations involving either nuclear or non-nuclear weapons.

4. The Government of Japan is convinced that, for the well-being of all mankind, international cooperation with respect to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and the peaceful applications of nuclear explosions should be vigorously promoted in accordance with the provisions of this Treaty. It considers that peaceful nuclear activities in non-nuclear-weapon states party to the Treaty should in no way be hampered by this Treaty and also that Japan should not be discriminated against in favour of other states party to the Treaty in any aspect of such activities.

5. The Government of Japan appreciates the Declarations of the United Kingdom and the United States, both nuclear-weapon states, that they will accept the application of safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency to their peaceful nuclear activities. It urges the other nuclear-weapon states to take similar action.

6. The Government of Japan hopes that Review Conferences, as provided for in this Treaty, will continue to be held at regular intervals in order to ensure the appropriate operation of this Treaty.

Information Centre (Embassy of Japan),
9 Grosvenor Square, London W.1
Tel: 01-493 6030

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Norman MacKenzie*

The Once and Future Fabians

'The Fabians,' Edith Nesbit wrote to a friend in February 1884 soon after the society was founded, 'are quite the nicest set of people I ever knew.' She might have added that they were among the oddest – spiritualists, land reformers and moral enthusiasts, almost all of them young people scratching a living as clerks and journalists and looking for congenial companions on the fringes of London's literary and political bohemia. As early as May 1882 Percival Chubb, an earnest young civil servant who was the true and forgotten founder of the Fabians, was talking of organising a little club which 'should be the centre of a general regenerating movement'. When the first Fabians came together in the autumn of 1883 they were not even sure whether they wanted to establish a commune or a debating society, or go off to Lower California and set up a utopian colony. About the only point on which they were agreed was that they wished morally to improve themselves and exercise their troubled consciences by doing good to others.

What Bernard Shaw always called 'The Fabian' – a collective singular which, like 'The Chesterbelloc,' was a notable creature in the Edwardian political bestiary – had a hard time deciding what it was and what it should do. In the minute book for 10 May 1884 G.B.S. wrote: 'This meeting was made memorable by the first appearance of Bernard Shaw.' Up to that moment there was not much to note except the significant title of the first Fabian publication, a scruffy little piece of rhetoric called *Why are the Many Poor?* written by an alcoholic housepainter, the only workman among the first Fabians.

For it was the misery of poverty, the stench of the slums and the degradation of the workhouse which obsessed anyone in the Eighties who had a sense of what was then called 'social compunction'. Long before the Fabians worked out in detail their distinctive brand of socialism they discovered a common sense of a civilising mission – to convert the middle classes to clean up the morass of England's lower depths. Most of them, after all, were lapsed Evangelicals.

This sense of mission has been the Fabian hallmark. They were comic, with their fads, foibles and beads; sometimes tragic, with nervous breakdowns and suicides; often as ridiculously pretentious as the Three Tailors of Tooley Street, with Shaw leading them in claims to importance and influence which do not stand up to close scrutiny. But they were dedicated and energetic, waiting like Fabius for their day to come. Meanwhile they set about discovering how to change the world when it did. There was the earnest clerk from the Colonial Office, who looked like Napoleon III and talked like a Cockney tradesman, busy writing the name Sidney Webb into social history as the society's strategist and theoretician. There was the elegant Hubert Bland, a Tory-Socialist who hated Liberals and loved women. There were the gruff and loyal Pease, parcelling up Fabian tracts in his dining room, the nervy Wallas meditating on human nature in politics, and the handsome Olivier, combining a career in the Colonial Service with the most outrageous opinions. And there were what Morris called 'the named and nameless', drafting tracts and leaflets, sifting statistics and sorting ideas, week by week, steadily infiltrating the idea of collectivism into the mind of the middle class.

'Nothing in England is done,' Webb wrote to Edward Pease in October 1886, 'without the consent of a small intellectual yet practical class in London not 2,000 in number. We alone could get at that class . . .' That was, and in some ways remains, the Fabian purpose.

It took five years for the Fabians to discover how to do it – and there were many moments along the way when the society could have foundered like so many of its contemporary clubs and coteries. On New Year's Day 1886, after an address by Edward Carpenter on 'Private Property', Shaw scribbled in the minute book:

> Awfully dull meeting. Wilson yawning like anything. No wonder! Infernal draught from the window, Coffin fidgeting – putting coals on the fire, distributing ipecacuanha lozenges, & so on. Miss Coffin sitting on the landing, evidently bored . . . Something making a frightful noise like the winding of a rusty clock. Mrs Bland suspected of doing it with the handle of her fan. Wish she wouldn't. Two or three meetings like this could finish up any society.

The Fabians, nevertheless, had a knack of survival. Perhaps this is the next most interesting thing about them. Several times the society slumped into the doldrums, uncertain what to do next, ticking over in a dull routine. There was one such trough in the late Nineties, another before the first world war, a long one in the Twenties and Thirties. Several times, too, it was almost wrecked by sudden success, when an inrush of new members or the excitement of one of the regular revolts against the dominant Old Gang of Shaw, the Webbs, Bland and Wallas seemed likely to burst the society at the seams.

It is not easy to explain this quality of resilience. It is something to do with the Fabian style. In its early days, especially, the society accommodated the most diverse opinions – anarchists, Simple Lifers, Whitmanites, Positivists, Secularists, followers of Morris, admirers of Marx, ordinary workaday Radicals, those who believed salvation might be found by wearing sandals and eating at vegetarian restaurants and those who felt that the millennium would come the day England opted for the Single Tax. Unlike the other socialist sects, however, quarrelling over the split hairs of doctrine and denouncing heretics more fiercely than their opponents, the Fabians had no orthodoxy.

The Basis to which all members had to subscribe was so disarmingly vague that nothing was really required except high-toned intentions, two sponsors and a modest subscription. Fabianism was not so much a movement as a state of mind which managed to combine tough political argument with a remarkable degree of tolerance. Fabians could strongly disagree but they rarely reduced political debate to personalities or threw mud on motives. It was a style, I think, which was set in part by Shaw, the most brilliant debater of the century, who could destroy an opponent's argument with teasing wit, then praise his spirit, propose his election to the Fabian executive and covertly lend him a fiver.

At every crisis in the society's affairs between 1884 and 1914 Shaw was in the wings, stage-managing the business to ensure that there was fair play for the executive *and* for its critics, so that the society did not tear itself apart on issues that wrecked other causes and careers on the Left. 'You must study people's corns when you go clog-dancing,' Shaw told Wells tartly when he made his aggressive bid to throw out the Old Gang in 1906.

It was a style that also owed something to the curious personal relations of the early Fabians – that quality which Edith Nesbit noticed at the beginning. They came together and clung together thereafter, for all their differences in personality and politics, as if the society met some powerful psychic need, as if it were not so much a political club but something more like a family whose members were loyal and supportive to each other even when they differed. Life in Victorian London was pretty cheerless for the intellectual proletariat, struggling to make genteel ends meet, and many of the Fabians were provincials who had drifted into the capital to work and had no family or friends to provide company.

In Fabian meetings – as in the free concerts, museums, scientific lectures and debating clubs that provided the means to self-improvement and scenarios for reforming England – they found an emotional focus and some sort of status. Outsiders thought them superior, smug, often boring – but within the society there was a feeling of familial equality and a jokey camaraderie which persisted even when the society had made its mark and some of its members had

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* The First Fabians *by Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie will be published later this year by Weidenfeld and Nicolson.*

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become astonishingly eminent. No one, not Shaw or Wells or Chesterton, could condescend to other Fabians. No one tried. And the business of the society was always done on terms of real democracy. What other political group ever risked having its publications read and discussed and redrafted by the membership as a whole?

Anyone who tries to understand the role of the Fabians has to come to terms with this style – and with the way in which it has gone on appealing to a distinct stratum of English social life. Fabians, like the Salvation Army, seem to have a pool from which they unendingly draw recruits, almost recognisable by physical type and manner as well as social attitude. Certainly, spending much of recent years vicariously in the company of the first Fabians, I find them surprisingly familiar. If, by some Wellsian time-trick, the membership of the Central London Fabian Society in the Fifties had been exchanged with the students at the summer school at Harlech in 1909 both parties would have felt quite at home.

True, time brought some changes in the Fabians. Nude bathing at Dartington was further along the permissive scale than Swedish drill in gym-slips and knickerbockers: Cyril Joad tried hard to be the poor girl's Shaw. But even in 1909 Beatrice Webb was casting a cold eye on the flirting behind the hayricks and the propensity of young Fabiennes to treat the sessions as a school for husbands rather than an occasion for serious study. Behind the prim facade of Fabian duty old Adam has always lurked.

The Old Gang, puritans in public, were well aware of the private peccadilloes. How could they be otherwise, with Shaw philandering, Hubert Bland living *à trois – à quatre* when the going was good – and Wells snapping up any trifle worth considering? The Fabian executive might solemnly decide that no ice-creams should be served at a soirée, the members having to rest content with Cecil Sharp's Morris Dancers, but Edgar Jephson's lampoon on his fellow-members in his novel *Tangled Wedlock* reveals as much about them as Sidney Webb's *Facts for Londoners* or the play called *Our Little Fancies,* which Beatrice Webb promoted in 1911 to answer the question 'Given good management, what is wrong with the General Mixed Workhouse?'. And I believe the spectacle of the Webbs, Shaw and Wallas learning to ride bicycles on Beachy Head at Easter 1895 is as much part of the Fabian tradition as the appearance in a more solemn role of the same notabilities at the autumn lectures. There are neat cameos, too – Henry Salt having his watch stolen by a pickpocket at 'Bloody Sunday' in 1887 and realising he could not complain to the police at the same time that he was protesting against them breaking heads to protect the institution of private property; Shaw, on the same afternoon, abandoning the riot in Trafalgar Square because it was time to go home to Fitzroy Square for tea.

Though there were larks, there was always a steady grind as well. Year after year the tracts came out – over 100 in the first 20 years. There was little in them to set the Thames on fire, but a good deal to ensure that it was less of an open sewer, that the trams ran punctually across its bridges, that their drivers got fair wages and free municipal baths at the end of the day. The Fabians, it is true, did not invent Municipal Socialism. Chamberlain was years ahead of them in Birmingham. But when they got a foothold in London politics they turned gas-and-water into a blue-chip political share.

Nor did the Fabians invent Permeation – the other branded product that made their name – for the Positivists and the Radicals had been in that business for years. Their contribution was to repackage it so that they could sell collectivism to anyone. Webb described the process precisely in 1890 after *Fabian Essays* had brought the society out of the back streets and given it a national market:

> This permeation is apparently destined to continue, and the avowed Socialist party in England will probably remain a comparatively small disintegrating and educational force, never itself exercising political power, but supplying ideas and principles of social reconstruction to each of the great political parties in turn, as the changing results of English politics bring them alternately into office.

The irony of this policy was that in the end Webb and Shaw failed to make it work, after trying the Liberals, Rosebery's Imperialists and Balfour's Tories. By 1906 they were without allies or influence. It was

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Ramsay MacDonald, whom the Webbs disliked and distrusted, who became the greatest permeator of them all. After he had quarrelled with the Webbs he went off and settled in the ILP, which they dismissed as a bunch of sentimental enthusiasts. Within ten years, by applying the 1893 version of Webb's doctrine and tactics, he had ensured that Fabianism plus trade unionism equalled the Labour Party. This is one of the odder parts of the Fabian story, for the Fabian founders are now canonised by the Labour movement they distrusted and MacDonald is part of its demonology.

Permeation, possibly, was the saving of the Fabians, for it provided a rationale for their independence and kept them out of practical politics, where what Shaw called their 'frail little craft' might well have capsized. For they did not know how to cope with a national organisation. Each time a fair wind blew recruits into the society – like the great boom in the provinces in 1892 or the flood of newcomers in 1906 – the London leadership ran into trouble, for the enthusiastic neophytes always wanted to turn the society into a political party. When they found that the Old Gang could not be budged, and drifted off into the ILP, the Old Gang gave an audible sigh of relief. The society could only survive by what was later known as the 'self-denying ordinance'. If it became just another party bidding for money and votes it would be finished. It would either be captured – because it would have assets worth taking over – or driven out of business. It preferred, instead, to follow Webb's policy, which he neatly summarised in 1906, of 'never doing anything which others were already doing well, so as to concentrate all our available energy on what no one else was doing'.

I think the ability to spot such gaps in the market was Webb's greatest talent, for his purely political judgments were often shaky and sometimes disastrous. It was typical of the way he worked – and, indeed, of much of the Fabian contribution – that he in effect patented an innovation and then let others exploit it. The London School of Economics was the first success of this kind. It was an essentially Fabian idea: to sponsor research and teaching in order to improve the efficiency of government and commerce. Yet when Webb started it, on a few thousand pounds from a legacy which some grumpy Fabians thought should go entirely to the society, the gamble became a runaway success.

A few years later Webb once more carried a doubting membership behind him in the struggle to reform London education – an operation which called for all his skills as a promoter, for he had to persuade the Tories to hand it over to a Progressive LCC they hated and induce the Progressives to adopt a Tory policy they loathed. The third of the Fabian-style institutions was, of course, the NEW STATESMAN, where once again the Webbs took a flyer on an outside chance. All three of these ventures showed, I feel, that Fabianism had a constituency which did not fall into the obvious political categories.

The one Webb enterprise which was apparently a failure – the campaign for the break-up of the Poor Law – in fact underlines the point. For it rallied a large cross-bench following, and created a vigorous though short-lived organisation. It failed because the timing was wrong – the country was obsessed with the party fight about the House of Lords – and because the Webbs, carried away by Beatrice's excitement about the Minority Report's scheme for abolishing the Poor Law, did not know whether they were running a pressure-group or trying to start a new party. Even so, and though it was Lloyd George's schemes rather than the Minority Report which launched the Welfare State, it did arouse a sizeable part of middle-class opinion against poverty as an *unnecessary* evil.

Whatever else the Fabian Society has been and done – and its contribution has been significant – in a sense it has always been the spokesman for the middle-class party of reform that never was, yet persists as a presence in British politics. That, indeed, may be its peculiar virtue and the source of its continuing vitality: even when, after 1918, it formally aligned itself with the Labour Party it kept clear of the party machine and clung to its traditional formula of research, education and propaganda. It is significant that its survival between the wars was due, in large measure, to Douglas and Margaret Cole, who kept the idea of independence alive outside the society proper, in the New Fabian Research Bureau.

Why should it not so continue? Ninety years ago it had fewer than 100 members and a wobbly budget of £40. Even 70 years ago Webb, that great watcher of half-pennies, was reluctant to raise the wages of the 'female typewriter' by half-a-crown, and the current notion of an appeal to raise £200,000 would have staggered him. Whenever the society came into money Webb tried to tuck it away in case the windfall discouraged members from paying their dues. Yet when so much else of the Victorian reforming impulse has withered – not least the sense of public obligation – the Fabian flourishes. Perhaps the secret of its survival was the simple idea that though the New Jerusalem might be built some day it was necessary in the meantime to do something about the bad drains in the Heartbreak House of bourgeois England.

Jeremy Bugler

Countdown to the 'Breeder'

Tony Benn's Open Day last week, his national energy conference which proved a high-speed talk-fest of 58 speakers in seven hours and never one blink from the eyes of the Energy Secretary, is clearly a putting-into-practice of Benn's belief in participatory politics. The day was a fine success: people from all the energy strongholds stood and delivered and, more important still, the watchdogs barked. One watchdog especially sounded on the issue of the fast breeder nuclear reactor, and for that only the day was worth its weight of words.

For one does not have to be a knee-jerk eco-freak to believe that this Labour Government is on the threshold of taking one of the most important decisions of its administration: whether to go ahead and build 'the breeder' and set Britain on the way to a 'plutonium economy'. Since technological and industrial developments have as much effect on the way a nation evolves as political changes, the fullness of time may show Labour's decision about the breeder and nuclear expansion as important as, say, its actions on EEC membership or devolution. By the early autumn, says Benn, Labour will decide whether to allow the Atomic Energy Authority to build its first commercial breeder, and it is difficult to conceive of an issue of more moment for the inheritors of our society. This is the 64,000-megawatt question, and every scrap of Benn's openness will be needed if the formidable vested interests in the breeder, employers and unions, are to be held back while people and Parliament sift the evidence.

Some of the evidence is very scary. The breeder differs markedly from normal thermal nuclear reactors of the various types which have been built in Britain and many other countries. The breeder reactor creates more fuel, plutonium, than it 'burns'; thus it appears to many people with a gut-panic about future energy supplies as the very Horn of Plenty. But the breeder 'breeds' plutonium, which is probably the most dangerous material on earth. Plutonium is man-made, an element that did not exist until 1940, when University of California scientists created it. It is the stuff of nuclear warheads, and its commonest isotope, plutonium-239, has a half-life of a mere 24,400 years. It is so dangerous that it has been calculated that a few ounces of fine micrograms of the material, efficiently distributed, would be enough to give the people of a huge city like New York lung cancer within a few years.

Plutonium already exists in some tonnage today: in nuclear weapons stores and as a waste product of thermal reactors. The breeder, though, changes the game entirely: a decision to meet the UK's future energy needs by a number of breeders implies a constant and continual movement of plutonium around the country. For technical reasons, some of the irradiated fuel would need to be very radioactive indeed while it is being transported. The implications are formidable – some would say frightening.

To begin with, a 'plutonium economy' implies a state that would have to employ, screen, oversee, and keep sharp huge security forces to guard plutonium en route, say, from a cooling pond to a breeder. The threat of nuclear hijack would be always there, which is why so many eminent people at the UN Habitat conference in Vancouver

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affirmed that the breeder is God's gift to the terrorist.

A pro-breeder decision by Labour implies therefore a highly centralised society in the future, with an elite guarding and making decisions about the nation's plutonium. (Indeed, this is the implication of any major expansion of our nuclear industry.) If Britain turns out to have a desire for a decentralised society, with more local decision-making and local autonomy – well, forget it. A decision for the breeder may commit future generations to a type of society they may not wish, or worse, be unable to maintain. What odds on plutonium safety in a Britain or Europe in the midst of political upheaval or revolution?

The most depressing aspect of the proponents of nuclear expansion is the poverty of their historical perspective: they presume that the order of every future day will be a stable society with a corps of technicians able to look after nuclear wastes. They forget Joe Stalin and Hitler and the convulsions of Europe within their lifetimes; they even forget that terrorists travel the world today. And if a terrorist is inhuman enough to open up with machine-guns on women and children in Lodd airport, why should that terrorist recoil from getting his hands on plutonium?

Dangerous By-Product

Possibly it is fears like these that prompted Sir Brian Flowers, chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (the watchdog Labour created in 1970), to stand up at Benn's energy conference and make the day's most remarkable contribution. The Royal Commission is preparing a report on radiological safety for the Government and it has taken evidence from the Atomic Energy Authority. Sir Brian said: 'We believe that nobody should rely, for something as basic as energy, on a product that produces in quantity a by-product as dangerous as plutonium, unless he is absolutely convinced there is no reasonable alternative course of action. I am bound to say that we have not been wholly convinced by the evidence submitted to us.'

He went on: 'We find it difficult to accept that there should be a massive increase in the nuclear power programme until it has been shown beyond reasonable doubt that there exists at least one method to dispose of these substances once and for all, should future generations find that desirable.'

Sir Brian, who is actually a part-time member of the AEA board and the Rector of Imperial College, said that in a world where plutonium was being widely used the safeguarding must have implications for the nature of our society 'which have not so far been taken into account by the Government . . . Not only are we not aware, but the Government seems to have preferred at least until today that we should not be aware of these problems . . . Although it is not our desire to prevent an appropriate nuclear programme – the possible advantages of which we can well understand – we do not believe the long-term implications and alternatives, including conservation, have been sufficiently explored.' In my book, that speech is the most piercing whistle-blow since Labour took over, and perhaps it will at last set off an open examination of our secretive, discrete, nuclear industry.

The AEA and other breeder proponents use predominantly two arguments for a rush-the-breeder decision. They contend that uranium is being depleted, so thermal reactors are going to run short, and that energy forecasts show that a gap in supply will appear unless it is plugged by the breeder.

But doubts are thrown on both these assertions in a remarkable book by Gerald Foley, *The Energy Question*, just published in Pelican. Foley believes that uranium depletion is not as serious as it has been presented and he argues that forecasts of rising demand are likely to be more notable as examples of the frailty of the forecaster's art than as reliable predictions upon which we should set our sails.

At the energy conference Friends of the Earth and the Conservation Society, in a cogent joint paper, pointed out that a society can control demand as well as supply, and that energy conservation technologies are every bit as fruitful as supply technologies (as the US Energy Research and Development Administration is now arguing). Actually, it is nearly always cheaper and easier to reduce demand than to increase supply if the dreaded gap does appear.

The omens for a sensible, unhurried decision about the breeder are still poor despite Bennery. The AEA is anxious to involve other European nations in a breeder programme and 'international collaboration' seems to have a mesmeric effect upon MPs. If MPs have not yet learnt that international programmes make financial control difficult and cancellation almost impossible, then they never will. Walter Patterson, the Canadian nuclear physicist believes: 'An international fast-breeder programme will make Concorde look like a bargain.'

The First Priority

The AEA is also likely to beg Benn: 'Just give us one little one.' But such a start could be, especially if a technologically-blinded Conservative Administration came into power, the start of a huge programme of breeder reactors, costing billions and soaking up funds for other types of energy research. Techno-dazzle is still with us, and the AEA will be promoting the achievements of its prototype fast breeder at Dounreay for all its worth.

The strangest aspect of the AEA's panting urgency and the Government's promise of a breeder decision by the early autumn is the fact that Britain is flush with energy at the moment. The CEGB has a lot of excess capacity at its power stations. There is absolutely no need to hurry a decision. Perhaps the first priority is to get Benn to extend the period for public consultation to more than a few weeks of heat-wave, holidays and the silly season.

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London Diary

☐ By Friday it may have ended in a doomsday thunderstorm, but on Tuesday the heat-wave showed no sign of abating; and when I woke early, at five o'clock, to write this piece, the sun was already, as the old story-tellers used to put it, 'high in the heavens' – and not a bright, healthy English sun but a sinister red ball, glowering 'through the horizontal misty air, shorn of his beams'. I have rather enjoyed this exotic excess of heat and adopted tropical techniques for keeping relatively cool: windows shut and curtains darkly drawn all day, opened only for the breeze at dusk; tepid, not hot and not cold, baths; hot tea and iced soft drinks (but London is *still* inadequately supplied with ice – no pub, no club, few restaurants seem able to do it). Fortunately for some hundreds of us, the chambers of Parliament are air-conditioned – but not the more 'eyeball-to-eyeball' setting of the committee rooms, where tempers accordingly, rise. On Monday some parliamentary lifts broke down through overheating, so one had to lose one's cool after all, climbing lots of stairs.

☐ Enoch Powell can never resist overheating the language. Last weekend *Any Questions?* (which has changed from the excellent radio programme it used to be, when performance was applauded rather than views) gave him his head with a question on immigration. Paul Johnson and Elizabeth Longford tried to keep the argument rational, but I am sorry to say that Malcolm Muggeridge, in effect and very cunningly, and with a semblance of holding the balance, backed Powell – who seized on the word 'conquest' (used by Johnson in reference, historically, to the Norman conquest) and shouted 'Conquest . . .! Is it to be a *conquest*?' (by 'two to four million' coloured intruders, 'a minority which is accorded special privileges'). The applause was tumultuous – but then the broadcast was from a Sussex village, in which there are presumably few or no blacks. Powell also committed himself to a declaration of the racial purity of this traditionally mixed nation: 'We are *extremely* homogeneous.'

☐ The Nazi-like myth of racial purity – tell it to the royal family! – was also a theme of at least one speaker, Lord Barnby, in a debate on immigration last week in the House of Lords. He concluded a somewhat discursive speech with the poignant words: 'Mixed blood is a sad thing. Those who know the West Indies have seen it . . . God forbid that we should see a big extension of that situation in this noble land of ours, which has had purity of blood for generations, and which wants to maintain it for the benefit of posterity.' Immediately before Lord Barnby, there had been an excellent and thoughtful speech by Lord Pitt of Hampstead – our old friend Dr David Pitt, now the only black peer – in which he said (a): 'The suggestion that if there are fewer people from the New Commonwealth there will be a better society, suggests that people from the New Commonwealth are a form of pollution . . . This, in itself, engenders prejudice'; and (b): 'When people protest about immigration they are in fact protesting about their living conditions.' An intelligent Tory, Lord Colville of Culross, also helped to get the subject into proportion: 'For many centuries, we . . . have built up a reputation for providing a welcome and a home for peoples of very different origins from all over the word. In turn we have as a nation reaped a harvest of enrichment from that hospitality.' It is a familiar point; but with people like Mr Robert Relf of Leamington around – he used to belong to the Ku-Klux-Klan – it is necessary to make it again and again.

☐ A new full-length rhyming-couplet satire by Clive James is an event; and when it is recited by the poet himself at the ICA, as part of the international poetry festival – lasting for more than a hundred riveting minutes – it is a *tour de force* (and indeed *de sauce* and *d'horizon*) of exceptional quality. James's first one was a survey of the London literary scene: this one is of British politics, and is entitled *Britannia Bright's Bewilderment in the Wilderness of Westminster*. It is to be published in book form by Cape in October. On Monday night moments of relief in James's marathon reading were supplied by Russell Davies, who uttered the voices of the various pseudonymous but identifiable characters in the poem. He has a remarkable range of imitations – strongest as 'Lord Brownale, a Labour peer', and 'Sir Mac McHack, a well-loved ex-PM', less convincing as 'Michael Phutt, a Left-wing Theorist' and 'Tony Wedgtail-Titt, a scourge of the privileged classes'. The Tory leader, 'Margo Hatbox', was uncannily 'like'. So, I must say, was our NS editor, 'Howard Horrid'. Rude as this is, it is mild compared with the invective against poor 'Nigel Dampstain, a gossip', whose skin is described as, literally, alive with lice. But I suppose anything is better than being left out of so comprehensive a conspectus. An occasional line of true poetry emerged – of Oxford, 'the dreamy dons colliding in the street'.

☐ Before the performance I had a drink upstairs with Charles Osborne, of the Arts Council, and Don Rumbelow, of the City Police, the Jack-the-Ripper expert. A splendid buffet was being laid out for some landscape architects. Rumbelow, regrettably, stole from it half a gherkin. The barman rebuked him sharply: 'If you muck about, *out*!' 'Are you going to have him prosecuted?' I asked. 'No,' said the barman. 'He's eaten the evidence.'

☐ One of the indispensable reference books is the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*. But, just as its second edition is a good deal better than the first (1941), the second now needs updating. It was published in 1953 and partly revised in 1959; and the selection of writers included at length inevitably represents the taste of a generation ago. There is (for instance) not one line of Auden in it. So a radically revised third edition is now in preparation: the existing book is to be reduced in bulk by about one-third, and then enlarged with new matter. A team of ten is working on the excision; a team of 20 on the inclusion of the new stuff. The two teams overlap to a considerable extent: suggestions for inclusion are made on seven-column forms (space for texts, sources, dates etc.), and the forms are then photocopied and sent round to every member of both teams – but anonymously, so that personal likes and dislikes won't affect the judgment. On each form there is a space for a yes-or-no vote. The inclusion of a quote is thus decided democratically – subject to the final decision of an editorial trio led by Richard Brain.

☐ As a member of the selectors' team, I have been looking for the source of a statement of dialectical materialism which I have known by heart for many years: 'Every thing is is a relative unity of interpenetrating but ineradicable opposites.' Could it be by Hegel? Advice, please.

☐ The *Guardian* (*Grauniad*?), notorious for misprints, surpassed itself on Monday. It made the second sentence of Jill Tweedie's article (on dieters) run: 'Everywhere they sit, poring over their calorie-counters like *rabbits* over the Talmud . . .' Equally good was the *Daily Telegraph* recently on the divorce decree granted to Sir Arthur Bryant: 'Sir Arthur . . . was separated from his *life* in 1971.' But perhaps we should not be too fussy about misprints. I recently bought, at Hay-on-Wye, a pleasant little book of 1628, called *Britain's Remembrancer*, which has on its last page this disarming notice: 'The faults escaped in the printing, wee had not such meanes to prevent, as we desired, nor could we conveniently collect them, by reason of our hast, or hazard, and other interruptions; we therefore leave them to be amended, censured, and winked at, according to the Readers courtesie or discretion.' I strongly commend Hay-on-Wye to book-hunters – not only the famous and vast establishment of Mr Booth, spread throughout so many of the town's buildings, but the smaller, selective and tidier shop of Mr Carter; while the salmon trout and the salad buffet at the Black Lion are the best I have struck west of London.

Tom Driberg

This England

Prizes: £1.50 book token for first entry, £1 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ White English male, 34, good mature body, hairy chest with 41in measurement. 5ft 7ins tall, well developed legs etc. Will pose for viewers, sketches. Persons in late 50's to 70's, any nationality. Will also clean cellars and attics. – *Gay Examiner* (M. Smith)

☐ Answering questions at Northallerton Magistrates' Court about the ages of people who attend the town's Sayers nightclub, solicitor Robert Lloyd said: 'Some of them are as old as 30.' – *Northern Echo* (Leo Frain)

☐ English is an adjective that does and should include the other components of the British Isles. – *Sunday Telegraph* (Jean L. Thomson)

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Edward Zuckerman

Hands Across 200 Years

I freely admit that I have been less than diligent in celebrating my country's Bicentennial. I have not purchased a Bicentennial toilet seat (although I *have* dried my hands on Bicentennial paper towels), nor have I served any meatballs over Bicentennial pasta. When the historical Bicentennial minute is presented on CBS television each night at 8.30, I take the opportunity to go into the kitchen for a beer, and not even a beer in a Bicentennial can. I have conspicuously neglected to think long or hard about our great American heritage or about prospects for America's third century. And I have not walked the Freedom Trail right here in Boston since 1972, when a visiting English friend asked to have a look at it. (When we reached the site of the Boston Massacre, he said he'd never heard of it. Shocked, I consulted a reference and told him how British soldiers had shot down five colonists in 1770. 'You call *that* a massacre?' he demanded. 'What about My Lai?' I am, in short, a Bicentennial slouch, unenthusiastic and barely informed. And yet I wonder at one point again and again: why are we celebrating the Bicentennial *with* the British?

The American Revolution was a war *against* the British, or so I was taught in school. So is it not somewhat surprising that British troops, both authentic and mock, are tramping through commemorative ceremonies all over the country? That American delegations are visiting Britain and British delegations are visiting America? That the Royal Navy is sending a couple of ships to New York to help celebrate the Fourth of July, and that next week the Queen herself will be arriving on an official Bicentennial tour?

The events we are commemorating together were hardly occasions of Anglo-American friendship. 'The town of Boston ought to be knocked about its ears and destroyed,' advised a Member of Parliament in 1774. In the next year a Massachusetts newspaper described the opening skirmishes of the Revolution under the headline: 'Bloody Butchery by the British Troops.' The Revolution itself was not amicable. And neither was the War of 1812.

I am not, by any means, opposed to the present good relations between America and Britain, concurring as I do in the general American view that England is a quaint and pleasant little place where the people have nice accents. I only find it odd that we are celebrating the Revolution as if we had been allies in it.

I raised this issue recently with officers of the Royal Marines and the Black Watch when they were in Boston with their bands for a show billed as 'a royal salute to America's 200 years of independence'. The event had been advertised with the slogan 'The British Are Coming', which was the message spread by patriot Paul Revere in 1775. The Americans who received it in 1775 assembled to shoot the British down. This year the only hostility came from Irish-American pickets.

'I think all is forgiven,' said Major Paul Sugden of the Black Watch. 'We've had a wonderful welcome everywhere.'

But how did it feel to be celebrating a British defeat? Every officer I spoke to managed to put the best possible face on the matter. Yes, said Sugden, the Black Watch had been in America during the Revolution, but it had performed 'as always with the Black Watch, marvellously'.

And the Royal Marines? 'We had one or two successes,' said Lieutenant John Roberts modestly. 'We won at Bunker Hill, you know.'

Another positive tack was taken by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu at a recent reception in New York: he proposed a toast to George Washington, 'whose British characteristics of tenacity and courage brought victory to the United States'. More commonly, however, the era of the Revolution is downplayed in Anglo-American observances of its anniversary. Emphasised instead are common traits of language, law and custom, as well as the 20th-century Anglo-American alliance. These things officially explain the visit of the Queen and everything else. And if Britain manages to get a few tourist dollars out of the affair, that's fine too. (Lord Montagu was here with a delegation promoting visits to Britain's historic houses. British Airways is running newspaper ads that beckon: 'Come home, America. All is forgiven.')

On the American side, however, the matter may be more complicated, as the Bicentennial has engendered political controversy. Not only is the manner in which the Revolution is being commemorated a cause of debate (some people have objected to Bicentennial packages of bull semen marketed by a Wisconsin breeders' cooperative), but the Revolution's commemoration has become an occasion for renewing debate about the Revolution itself.

Of course, the Revolution was controversial among Americans in its own time. Historians advising the Boston Bicentennial Commission have estimated that slightly less than half of Boston's population in 1775 supported the rebel cause, with the remainder equally split between Tories (Loyalists) and the undecided. A comparable test of contemporary American sentiment has been provided by a Boston exhibit called 'The Revolution', at which visitors are presented with more or less detached descriptions of the 18th-century situation and asked to 'vote' for the course of action they would have supported during various Revolutionary episodes. Would they, for example, have joined in the Boston Tea Party, bought the tea and paid the tax, or avoided the tax by impounding the tea? A computer tabulates the results. More than 200,000 people have passed through the exhibit now, and they have divided in almost exactly the same proportions as the Bostonians of 1775, despite the presumed success of the American experiment. (The British ambassador to Washington has also taken the test: he turned out to be a Tory.)

Further manifestations of latter-day Toryism may be found in several recreated British regiments that are taking part in some Bicentennial celebrations. One of them is the Tenth Regiment of Foot, which travels to parades and re-enactments throughout New England in its meticulously reconstructed 18th-century uniforms and wigs. They are generally met by a combination of applause and boos.

'I was looking for something to do for the Bicentennial,' I was told by a high school teacher who recently joined the regiment. 'I considered joining a couple of Minutemen companies and I went to their meetings. But they just sat around and worried about who was going to get the beer. I was impressed by the regimentation and authenticity of this group, right down to no zippers on the pants and everything else.'

'I'm descended,' said another 'British' soldier, 'from a man who fought in the Revolution on the patriot side with his seven sons. I look at his grave every once in a while and wonder what he would think of this.'

'Our group is totally apolitical,' said Colonel Vincent Kehoe, an Irish-American makeup manufacturer who organised the regiment in 1968. 'In school we were always taught that the British were the bad guys. We're trying to provide the other side of the picture by recreating the British soldier as he dressed, acted and fought in the American Revolution.'

The day after we spoke, Colonel Kehoe was to lead his men to Rhode Island to re-enact the burning of the town of Bristol by the British. But, he said: 'We're not the bad guys. We're protecting King and Country. We're the police. The rebels were the longhairs. There was a very high degree of political activism as we know it today among the rebel forces. Sam Adams would have been right at home with Jeremy Rifkin.'

Kehoe's reference to Rifkin demonstrated that he has been keeping up with the current Bicentennial debate. Rifkin is leader of the People's Bicentennial Commission, a New Leftish group that has had considerable success in publicising the often overlooked fact that there were radicals among the American revolutionaries. The American Establishment has always had a little trouble handling the idea that the country was founded in a revolution, and the People's Bicentennial Commission delights in the attendant contradictions. 'We're celebrating the Bicentennial of a *Revolution*,' Rifkin said in a 1974 speech to corporate executives. 'REVOLUTION! . . . What is a revolution? It's a massive upheaval of the social, political and economic institutions of a society . . .' He proceeded to quote Thomas Jefferson: 'I sincerely believe with you that banking establishments are more dangerous than standing armies.'

The PBC is trying to parley the Bicentennial into an anti-corporate movement. 'Substitute ITT, GM and Exxon for King George, and Wall Street for the throne room, and you have an old and familiar story,' it

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argues. This is, needless to say, a different tone from that of the official Bicentennial programme, which manages to reconcile Tom Paine and Coca-Cola. The Advertising Council, which prepares 'public service' commercials for use in donated broadcast time on such topics as preventing forest fires, has just launched a multi-million dollar, Bicentennial-linked campaign to sell Americans on the virtues of capitalism. But most Bicentennial events are not so much ideological as bland. The programme includes thousands of locally-sponsored projects, ranging from an exhibition of Navajo blankets in Indianapolis to the awarding of a numismatic medal in Los Angeles. It continually declines to make connections between 1776 and 1976.

In a general move to depoliticise the Bicentennial, the emphasis on Anglo-American amity is a natural element. If the two countries are really friends after all, it follows that the Revolution really amounted to less than meets the eye. It was a colourful but non-threatening episode in the development of a great, liberal, capitalist nation. So we light the fireworks, shake hands with the Queen and get on with the business of America.

Cambridge, Massachusetts

First Person

Arthur Marshall

Brace Yourself

In the dear old dead days of long ago when British Rail made money, worked on steam and called itself the Great Western, LNER and so on, there were trains that went not only inter-city but to all parts and the attractions of the various parts were colourfully advertised on station platform hoardings. Marcel-waved bathing beauties lured travellers to Bournemouth. The front at Brighton, with a view of the Hotel Metropole, sent businessmen's pulses racing ('I have to be away for a few nights, my dear.'). And 'Come to Skegness,' a poster used to say, adding 'It's so bracing'.

And so to bracing Skegness I've finally got, kindly invited to the Butlin's Holiday Camp there by its public relations officer, a genial and intelligent Scotsman and a keen NS reader. From my arrival at the main gate, where the flags of all nations flap merrily in the bracing breeze, it was smiles and courtesy all the way. The vast establishment, jammed with humanity and all firmly wired in (not to stop them getting out but to discourage gate-crashers), stretches, hugging the sea-front, as far as the eye can see which, in flat Lincolnshire, is very far indeed. At peak periods it can hold 12,000 holiday-makers (a staff of 2,000) and it was easy at first to get lost. Indeed, shown to my chalet (X 25, complete with bathroom), I became briskly disorientated. One row of neat chalets (roses climb up them) is very like another, but I learned to associate my own row with, at the entrance to it, a chic boutique selling Be Gay Shoes ('Give your feet a holiday too!').

The male and female staff who run the games and generally act as hosts – what the Frogs call *animateurs* – are known as Redcoats and one of my anxious fears was that of being set upon by a buxom lady Redcoat who, with a glad shout of 'Cooom on, Grundud', would force me to join other senior citizens in a boisterous Knees Up Mother Brown. I had, in fact, prepared an escape excuse ('It's my silly old leg, I'm afraid. The war, you know. Just one of the many that Jerry's machine-guns didn't miss'). But nothing of the sort happened. No such unsuitabilities occurred and in the chalet lines there was great camaraderie and warmth, with 'hullo, hullo' from right and left, introductions and handshakes ('Pardon a sticky paw') and offers of reading matter ('Would you care for a squint at my *Mail*?'). One recognised immediately a fine *esprit de camp*. Children everywhere, and very well behaved. Sound-proofing tip-top. From next door, not a transistor, not a cough, or snore, or worse.

Lunchtime, second sitting, and I make hungrily for the York Dining Centre and row 18, table 9. Steaming pots of tea grace every meal, with vinegar and tomato ketchup at the ready, and to anyone with a wide experience of schools, public or otherwise, the food would come as no surprise: good, straightforward, choiceless nourishment guaranteed to tide one over, replete, until the next intake. It is not, perhaps, for the gourmet stomach, but then why should it be? For any birthday or wedding anniversary we rejoice communally. The Redcoats enter in procession, to cheers and clappings, bearing glasses and a festive bottle which certainly looks like champagne but must I think be *un vin mousseux quelconque*. The happy recipients pop the cork, which hits the ceiling. More cheers. At the next table a large and cheerful Birmingham family are making much of a tiny Asian child with huge dark eyes. 'If we hadn't brought him, he wouldn't have got a holiday, you see. We thought he'd miss his mum but he hasn't cried once, not once, have you?' Violent gurglings and another slobbery spoonful of chocolate ice-cream ('Ooops! We nearly had it all down your front, didn't we?').

When dealing with children, the Redcoats are at their splendid best and rate uncle and aunt status. On the greensward outside the dining centre about 30 little entranced tots are being instructed in ring-a-ring-o'-roses. No pupil power here: friendly discipline prevails, with happy results. Among the afternoon's many attractions is a fancy dress competition for children in the Empress Ballroom. Uncle Leslie officiates, assisted by Auntie Tina, Auntie Jackie and Auntie Dot. Long hair and costumes cause occasional confusion. 'And what's this little girl's name?' 'Greg. And I'm a boy.' 'And this little chap?' 'Joanne. And I'm a girl.' Even the winners, a fig-leaved Adam and Eve are not, at the age of five, too precise. The camp photographer, Uncle Kevin, clicks ceaselessly and Auntie Dot moves among us deftly selling raffle tickets for a motor-car (proceeds to charity).

The evenings bring innumerable pleasures. There is, of course, bingo (in the Regency Bingo Lounge). There is the Gracious Lady (over 55) Contest. In the Bier Keller you can singalong with Baron Wolfgang's Oompah Band, the Baron and his instrumentalists heavily disguised in Tyrolean rig, with much waving of beer steins. There is the search for the camp's jolliest fatty of the week ('The most Cheerful, Charming and Chubby Lady'), the contestants being tickled into hysterics by personable male Redcoats. There is the stately decorum of Old Time dancing in the Regency Ballroom. There are films and stage shows.

Additional food and drink are enormously obtainable and a young man wishing to cut a dash with that attractive girl in chalet P 38 can whizz her to the candle light and sweet music of the Golden Grill. And there is the competition for the Most Glamorous Grandmother (42 compete, and not the faintest sign of self-consciousness in any of them, in this or any other contests), rightly won by a sensational lady, aged 47 with three grandchildren, with jet black hair *en bouffant* and sporting a black chiffon cocktail dress with mother of pearl embroidery at the bodice. Super legs, silver shoes, serene face.

It's all very, very remarkable. 'Our true intent is all for your delight,' it says in large letters over the Sundae Parlour, and though this is the first and the last we see of Shakespeare it really tells all. Apart from any extra food, drink and bingo, the week's tariff includes everything – heated swimming pools, chair-lifts, monorails, gigantic amusement parks, tennis, roller-skating, free nappy washing service, etc etc. If this now reads like an advertisement for Butlin's, then let it be so. Such benefaction deserves advertisement. Now, there was a knighthood that really made sense. The charges are quite staggeringly low. A week in May will cost an adult, all in, £22. Children much less. In September it will cost £28. It's more in more popular months, but not all that much more. The same for everybody. No segregations or graduated scales of charges. All, in fact, one class.

This India

☐ One Bengali newspaper published reports of what Surupa's spirit had allegedly said at a planchette session. Asked whether she had committed suicide or been murdered, the spirit was said to have replied: 'I shan't tell.' Asked why, the spirit was said to have added: 'Don't you know the matter is sub judice?' – *The Times* (Nick Battisto)

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Letters to the Editor

Electoral Reform

Sir, The motives and arguments of the National Committee for Electoral Reform demand rather closer scrutiny than Corinna Adam (NS 25 June) has given them.

I suspect that what Lord Harlech and his friends really fear is that any political party which advocates substantial change in the economic or social system should actually have a chance to carry out its policy. Any known system of proportional representation, including the curious hybrid produced by the Blake Commission, would have made sure that we would never have had a majority Labour government in Britain.

But even if my suspicions about this distinguished body of top people are unworthy, they have yet to show that their reforms would give more power to the people. Democracy is not just about how to get a representative legislature: it is about how to get responsive and effective government. All democratic systems have turned to political parties to secure a practical choice of alternatives. If you want to change or preserve something, be it an economic interest or a political principle, you have no real choice but to join with like-minded people in a group which, as soon as it has any measure of success, may take on all the characteristics of a political party.

The real choice for the elector is thus between a severely restricted range of alternative parties, each of which has at least a chance of gaining a majority and carrying out its policies, and a wider range of more homogeneous parties, each of which must engage in bargaining after an election to see what part of its programme can be salvaged in a coalition. The important issue for democrats is that the bargaining should be in the open – as in the constant, largely public, struggle for power and influence on policy within the major political parties. The dissatisfaction of the Labour Left wing with the policies of the Labour Government is a regular theme of the national press, and it is subjected to frequent tests of strength in the Parliamentary Labour Party, the NEC and at annual conference.

Would it be more democratic if the Left wing were to form a separate political party, supported by a minority whose rights of representation were secured by some form of PR? A social democratic party would then, in the days following a general election, bargain with the leaders of this left-wing party in an attempt to secure its support in forming a government. And any small party promoted by the system to a seat at the bargaining table must then start to make judgments *after* an election about which of the major parties it will support – judgments which can hardly be based on the case for independent representation which it was putting to the electorate only days or weeks before.

It would be a pity if the campaign for electoral reform were to open with supporters of the present system on the defensive. There is so much to be said for the British electoral system which can stand up respectably to the protestations of both the Blake and Harlech committees. The very lack of popular pressure for change is evidence that we have a system which is self-explanatory; which produces governments which survive and parties which adapt; which distinguishes usefully between minor parties with profound regional grievances, like the Nationalists, and those inspired by more general sentiments of idealism or cynicism, like the Liberals; which retains the responsibility of individual MPs to their constituents; and, above all, which gives voters a clear and meaningful choice at an election, instead of putting the real decisions into the hands of professional politicians negotiating in private afterwards.

There is undoubtedly a lot wrong with British politics, and particularly with the way in which our political parties organise themselves. But those who want to see Britain retain the capacity for political and social change within the parliamentary system should resist the siren song of electoral reform for the House of Commons.

ANDREW MCINTOSH

County Hall
London SE1

Sir, The advocates of electoral reform may well be 'nice people', as Corinna Adam states (NS 25 June); their political views, however, are a different matter. What this motley selection of political deadbeats all have in common is a hatred and fear of the Left. That's to say, now that the prospect of a socialist government is no longer implausible, our electoral system – which was all very well a few years ago when the Right was firmly in control of the Labour Party – is suddenly discovered to be 'undemocratic', apparently on the grounds that it no longer provides a guarantee that whatever party is in office, the Establishment will always be in power.

It is absurd for the PR advocates to claim that they are in favour of more 'democracy' when they are so frequently the self-same people who have, for example, supported the transference of Parliament's powers to the unelected EEC Commission, and supported the House of Lords – an undemocratic and elitist institution if ever there was one – in its sabotaging of socialist legislation. Newspapers like *The Times* have not, after all, a particularly honourable record in defending democracy. It seems that these people are only in favour of democracy when it poses no threat to *their* interests. With 'democrats' like these . . . who needs a dictatorship?

JAMES GAUSSEN

52 St Botolph's Road
Sevenoaks, Kent

Sir, The recent foundation of the National Committee for Electoral Reform and the earlier publication of the Hansard Society proposals on electoral reform have only helped to further the idea that proportional representation and electoral reform are the same thing. This is a pity, for although the Hansard Society report made a number of other recommendations, apart from the AMS system of PR, these recommendations were almost totally ignored by the press. Perhaps the most important of these was the suggestion that parliamentary candidates should be allowed to carry a party label on the ballot paper only if they have been selected by a poll of all the members of their constituency party, rather than by a central committee of probably no more than 100 people. As most seats are 'safe' and never change hands, it is the party committee which actually selects the MP in these seats and which really holds power. A poll of party members would make our selection procedures far more democratic.

Others have suggested having primary elections to select parliamentary candidates, among the registered supporters of each party. This would probably be even more democratic than the Hansard Society proposals as primary elections would involve far more people (some constituency parties have fewer than 100 members) and it would also produce a full-scale campaign, enabling party supporters to make a more informed choice than party members, who would probably just be given 100-word election addresses on duplicated party circulars under the Hansard Society system. It is true, of course, that primary campaigns would cost almost as much as the general election itself, but this would probably be money well spent because it would give far more voters the feeling that they had helped to select their MP and it might also ensure that unsatisfactory MPs could be deposed without their party losing the seat. Some electors might be reluctant to register themselves as supporters of one particular party and there is also the possibility that MPs would discriminate against registered supporters of their opponents when dealing with their constituents' problems. However, these are difficulties with which the Americans seem to have coped.

Primary elections would be a form of electoral reform which would not bring about great changes in the nature of our government, as PR would undoubtedly do. They would not solve all the problems, but then nor would PR, STV, AMS or XYZ, but at least they might help to reduce some of the disillusionment with our present 'system'.

MICHAEL CRICK

39b Cambridge Park
East Twickenham
Middlesex

Wimbledon and the Public

Sir, How much longer will we tolerate 'Wimbledon'? This dollar-earning event is the world's top tennis accolade in the world's most attractive tennis stadium and boasts of its organisation.

But what facilities do the organisers provide? Two gents' lavatories in neither of which a towel was to be found after 2.30 p.m. Two ladies' lavatories – one of which was closed from 2.00 p.m. onwards. We are so accustomed to high food prices at such functions that 26p for a Scotch egg does not shock, but soft drinks sold at the cafeteria were not even chilled, they were warm. Only the boys on the concourse outside had dry ice to cool the 15p lollies and orange drinks. The bar ran out of ice at 3.00 p.m., with the staff unreasonably abusive if protest was made. It must be difficult to find enough trained staff at short notice, but surely the contractors have more than a vague idea when the next Wimbledon will be? The staff were hot like the rest of us, but they were also rude, surly and unbelievably slow at serving. There can be no excuse for running out of ice. There are such things as ice-making machines, and Wimbledon fortnight has earned a reputation for warm weather.

Surely the most dangerous *indictment* is that while the temperature was soaring to 106 degrees in the Centre Court, there was no drinking water available anywhere on the grounds. Small boys were abused when they asked for some at the bar. This cynical

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materialism is unacceptable. Surely some kids have limited pocket money to buy lollies and soft drinks?

The elderly ex-servicemen hired as ushers and security men seem unnecessarily officious and totally unhelpful. They constantly harass the public about pausing on steps and other petty infringements. I heard remarks like 'Whom do they practise being nasty to for the rest of the year?' and 'The war's over, chum, and we won'. On the new seating block at Court 14 the two obvious ways out were blocked by burly ex-NCOs, and the bewildered spectators were pointed patronisingly towards an upside down exit sign with an arrow pointing round the back of the stand. Had the notice been right-side up so that it was readable, the arrow would have pointed in the wrong direction. No one had the wit to cut off the arrow and reaffix it the right way round with Sellotape, or let the crowd in by the back of the stand and so disrupt play less. There is no shaded seating anywhere on the ground for the elderly or very young, or those simply queasy from too much sun. The standard of line judging has risen over the years but is still appalling. In fact the only staff about whom no criticism was heard were the ball boys, and they were magnificent. These criticisms may be felt less by Centre Court and No 1 Court patrons, but they do pay considerably more.

I should point out that I am English and that I have not missed a Wimbledon Championship in the last 18 years. I have never complained because I always enjoy the tennis so much; and that, I suspect, is the case with most of those I have heard grumbling over the past few days. These conditions would not be tolerated in the US or Canada or at any Olympic standard meeting anywhere in Europe. Wimbledon is letting us down. We should demand drinking water, some shaded seats and a radical improvement in service to the public. At present one feels that the public is merely tolerated by the organisers.

GEORGE CANNELL

54 West Kensington Court
West Cromwell Road
London W14

Race and the Inner Cities

Sir, In your issue of 18 June you carried an open letter from the Rt Hon. Peter Walker MP to the Prime Minister. As black Community Relations Officers we wish to express our appreciation to Peter Walker for adding his immense prestige to the demands being made for positive action in the search for solutions to the plight of West Indians in this country. We have long tried to bring this matter to the attention of both local and central government.

We have said time and time again that anti-discrimination legislation is only one side of the coin. The other is a national affirmative programme. Attempts to get such a programme started have every time died in the quicksands of party political rivalry and on the altar of appeasement to racist elements. We believe that the time is now ripe for an all-party response. We believe also that such a programme is not only a matter for the cabinet and the ministers concerned but in addition for the West Indian community itself who should be consulted at every stage of the development of such a programme.

We are convinced Peter Walker has taken a bold and courageous step, we anxiously await the Prime Minister's reply.

JEFF CRAWFORD
JOHN RAFFERTY
EDDIE WARNER
RALPH STRAKER

679 Fulham Road
London SW6

Sir, Peter Walker has lent his personal authority and experience to the call for positive action in race and community relations. He is to be congratulated for this step; and for his suggestion that central and local government should work together to combat the social evils of racial discrimination and racial disadvantage. The new Race Relations Act goes a long way to combat discrimination but as Walker points out 'it is no use talking of lack of racial discrimination if lack of positive action means that the worst housing, the worst jobs – or no jobs – tend to be concentrated in one community'.

But I do not think it wise to omit the Asian communities from his recommendations. This is neither necessary nor practicable. Differences between West Indian and Asian communities undoubtedly exist but as many reports (of which the best known is the recent work of PEP) have shown, both groups share in common the twin evils of racial discrimination and disadvantage. What is needed is action to meet the needs of both groups. Action which Walker rightly says should link local and central government in 'a system of management . . . whereby the resources that are meant to be available to these people are made available to them'.

MARK BONHAM CARTER
Chairman

Community Relations Commission
15/16 Bedford Street
London WC2

Sir, No doubt some slip of the mind, such as we are all subject to, caused a serious error of fact on the front page of your issue of 11 June. The Notting Hill race riots were not in 1968, but in 1958. What is more important than that mistake is the correctness, at any rate by current standards, of your remark that 'they were promptly isolated by political condemnation . . .'.

The violence flared up on Saturday 30 August, the local MP (George Rogers) toured the area in a loud-speaker van on the Monday, calling for 'common sense, decency, and tolerance'; the first condemnation of the thuggery by a national leader came from Mr Gaitskell on 3 September.

The Southall murder was on 4 June. On the 14th a round-robin from a number of eminent persons, saying all the right things, was published in *The Times*. The Archbishop of Canterbury delineated the moral issues with great clarity and force at a press conference that afternoon. The Prime Minister backed him up in the House of Commons the next day (15 June).

The 'permissive society' dates from the 1960s. It does seem as if the speed of condemnation of evil is lower in 1976 than 1958.

FRANK HARDIE

18 Kensington Gate
London W8

Property-Owning Democracy

Sir, In his generous note on my book *The Decline and Fall of the Middle Class* Crucifer (NS 25 June) quotes me as saying that house purchase is the best investment. He goes on to ask: 'Is it really the feckless workers' fault that they are not given the chance to do the same?'

I agree with him 100 per cent. On every ground – economic, social, ethical – it is deplorable to think that the problem of working-class housing can be solved by the provision of council house ghettoes. Will Crucifer now join with me in a campaign to convert council house rents into mortgage repayments, and sell perhaps 80 per cent of the existing council house stock to sitting tenants on favourable terms? The aim would be to get mass owner-occupation within the next decade. Future building would be largely for sale.

PATRICK HUTBER

Sunday Telegraph
London EC4

Spiro Who?

Sir, In Weekend Competition 2414 calling for poems on World War III, Spiro Keats urged competitors to 'lay off the bomb, poetic holocausts being generally rather vulgar and tiresome'. In his report he has modified his remarks to 'go easy on the bomb'; however, he has not modified his abusive tone. He writes; 'You should have heard all the bleeding-hearts and jelly-knees beefing about my strictures on Bomb poetry.' As one of those who wrote to him, I must assume that his remarks apply to me as much as to others, jelly knees and all, and for this we pay 25p a week. And has he answered the criticism levelled against the competition? Hardly. All we have is the insult and the rather smug comment: 'I decided to be as good-natured and flexible as ever.' Good for Spiro.

In writing to him I said that world war without the bomb was inconceivable:

> To treat your words with Statesman's wit
> Is, in poet's eyes of suffering, surely vain?
> I know your meaning but it was cheaply said,
> And vulgar, strange choice of word,
> Out of line for the name of Keats.
> Am I tiresome for these hard lines?

Incidentally this was not an entry; it was a personal complaint to Spiro Keats. He has a platform and his readers have not. In view of his tone to myself and others, I hope you will find space for this.

PHILIP POLLARD

178 Kings Avenue
Woodford Green, Essex

Tory Smear

Sir, Could I add a correction to Sir Douglas Allen's report which was leaked to James Fenton (NS 25 June)? After knocking up for our Labour candidate for Brentford and Isleworth in 1970, I went round to the Vaizeys to celebrate Michael Barnes's victory against the odds. It is true to say I was excited, but then Michael Barnes showed that an excellent MP could hold on to a marginal seat against the national swing.

FRANK FIELD
Director

Child Poverty Action Group
1 Macklin Street
London WC2

Ascot *v.* TUC

Sir, Mr Whitehead (Letters 25 June) criticises committees of unions for deciding beforehand the way they will vote. He goes on to say: 'Everybody assumes, I hope rightly, that the results of Ascot races depend on the horses and riders alone.'

He *hopes*, rightly, because he knows or suspects that the results of races are sometimes also decided beforehand. But whereas the committee of unions gain no pecuniary advantage from their decisions, those who fix races do. It is no coincidence that the owners of racehorses are sometimes the same people who decide beforehand in the City of London the financial results of companies. The suckers are the same in both cases – the punters at the races and the small investors in the City.

J. HARVEY

Sunny Bank
Woodhurst Lane
Oxted, Surrey

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BOOKS & ARTS

Stephen Spender

Creating in the Mind a Map

Young Writers of the Thirties *National Portrait Gallery* until 7 November
The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s by SAMUEL HYNES *Bodley Head* £6.50

The exhibition *Young Writers of the Thirties*, selected by Alice Prohaska and designed by my brother Humphrey Spender, centres on W. H. Auden, Cecil Day-Lewis, Louis MacNeice, Christopher Isherwood and myself. In doing this, it follows closely the impression that readers of anthologies such as *New Signatures* and *New Country*, and the periodical *New Verse* may have got at the time: that the Thirties was a succession of literary events occurring in the biographies of these young writers and ending when the war broke out in 1939, soon after Auden and Isherwood had departed for America. One gathers from the photographs here, illustrating themes such as unemployment, poverty, the dereliction of industry and the rise of Mussolini and Hitler, that 'history' was the background for documents such as manuscript poems, letters, journals and the books produced by these young writers during the decade. Other writers and their work are presented as peripheral: there are photographs of William Empson, Edward Upward, E. M. Forster, John Cornford, Julian Bell, Virginia and Leonard Woolf, Rosamund Lehmann and George Orwell. Michael Roberts, Geoffrey Grigson and John Lehmann appear as the impresarios producing the five. There are cases containing magazines, *New Verse, Left Review* etc., and photographs and literature connected with the Group Theatre. There is also mention of the communist Unity Theatre and there are cuttings from the *Daily Worker*. There is, for those who want these impressions gathered together for them, a very explicit taped lecture by Reggie Smith in a side room, with more illustrations projected onto slides. There is also a case containing pictures of Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron and other Romantic-Revolutionary suppositious 'ancestors' of the Thirties 'Movement'. This is a bit misleading.

Nearly all the photographs, and some of the documentary material, are fascinating in revealing the style of a period. The handwriting in the letters of Isherwood, Upward and Auden of the early part of this period is extremely small, and one realises that here a connection is being quietly made with the bankclerkly impersonality, the ostentatious unassertiveness of T. S. Eliot. This in turn goes back to the rolled umbrella, conventional attire and short-cut hair of Laforgue. There was also a style cultivated by Isherwood and Upward when they were Cambridge undergraduates (and this of course takes us back before the Thirties) of writing fictions which opened with portentously absurd pseudo statements made by some guyable character, perhaps a schoolmaster: 'So you don't entirely approve of this modern craze for dancing?' or 'And so old boy, all you've got to do is plank down your two thousand' or, best of all, 'All the time the wind was south-west you were deadly keen on seals.' This is the world of Mortmere, Cambridge – pre-Thirties, but set for it like a trap.

There is other material in this exhibition equally rewarding and unexpected: for instance, examples of propagandist posters and postcards made by the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War, as fresh and incisive in their way as Picasso's famous series from the same period: *The Lies and Dreams of Franco.* Despite its implicit theme, that the Thirties *were* these young writers, this exhibition, especially through the photographs, goes quite beyond its theme and opens up on to very wide vistas of the time.

Almost inevitably someone came up to me at the opening and asked me: 'What does it feel like to be one of the two survivors?' – the other survivor, Christopher Isherwood, standing a few yards away from me and being pointed to by the questioner. The answer, of course, is that to walk through a series of tomb-like rooms where one's past life is presented so vividly and with such variety, and where it is so effectively sealed off into its past and from the world outside, is to feel buried alive, like the prisoners in the last act of *Aïda*: or perhaps just mummified, looking back at this interior from the old man's body of one's reincarnation.

However, there are other reasons why someone dramatised as a survivor should feel uneasy about the spotlighting of these five young reputations as the literary heroes of the Thirties. For one thing, we were not the heroes. The real heroes were John Cornford, Julian Bell, Christopher Caudwell, Ralph Fox, Humphrey Slater, Tom Wintringham, George Orwell and a few other writers who fought in Spain. Confronting death was, one might say, the only authentic experience of the Thirties, for reality then was the experience of some ultimate and horrible truth of Hitler's concentration camps, Stalin's Gulag Archipelago, the million Spaniards killed in the Civil War. An ironic comment on this truth is provided in the exhibition by a scrawled note in pencil from W. H. Auden to Professor E. R. Dodds, written at a time when Auden had, apparently, made up his mind to join the International Brigade:

> I am not one of those who think poetry should be directly political but in a critical period such as ours I do think the poet should have direct knowledge of the major political events.

And, after that: 'I shall probably make a bloody bad soldier but how can I speak to/for them without becoming one?'

Auden, like MacNeice, and like me, went to Spain but did not fight there. The selection of these names as representative seems then unfair, though understandable, perhaps even inevitable, if only because the organiser of the exhibition had to choose survivors who had lived to tell the tale. The injustice is not that of the organiser of this exhibition, but of the history of our times: though I do not feel complacent about it when I reflect that while these five of us continue to get so much attention, Edward Upward has been unable to find a publisher for the third volume of his trilogy, *In the Thirties.* This seems to me a scandal.

Samuel Hynes, in *The Auden Generation*, his extremely lucid, readable and intelligent study of the literary history in England of the Thirties, greatly enlarges the reader's view of the generation. Although, quite rightly, he discusses Auden more than anyone else, he treats the work of William Empson, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh and George Orwell seriously – though there is not enough of Empson. Yet I have only to mention these names to see reasons why it is those writers who were associated with Auden himself who seem representative of the Thirties generation.

One reason is that the writers who were undergraduates at the end of the Twenties and the beginning of the Thirties were at an age, of a social class, and in a situation in which they were poised to receive with the greatest sensitivity and over the longest period of time the succession of shocks, like those from an earthquake, which continued from 1929 to 1938 (ending with the Munich settlement and the victory of Franco in Spain). Here are some relevant material facts about these writers: they were all of them (except perhaps Isherwood) of the middle middle class which does not take status or financial security for granted. They all knew what it was to have independent means, but had either to live very modestly or scrape around for a living. Three of them (Auden, Isherwood and myself) went to Germany before 1930 and experienced what it was to live among young people who existed mostly from hand to mouth but who had a strong sense of material values. In lieu of money they were attached to sun, sex, 'new styles of architecture, a change of heart'. Experience of this economically unstable Germany was almost like the experience of living in a classless society. Auden and Isherwood, in their early drafts of *The Dog Beneath the Skin* (called then *The Enemies of the Bishop*), treat English working-class

Among this week's contributors:

STEPHEN SPENDER'S most recent books are *Love-Hate Relations: A Study of Anglo-American Sensibilities* (1974), *Eliot* (1975) and *W. H. Auden: A Tribute* (1975).

C. H. ROLPH is working on a study of the Queen's Pardon.

VIEDA SKULTANS lectures in Mental Health at the University of Bristol. Her book *Intimacy and Ritual* was published in 1974.

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delinquent boys very much as if they were German boys whose 'values' are those of a classless society.

I read recently somewhere that the Thirties generation was essentially the offspring of Bloomsbury, and that after disillusionment with politics, we returned to our Bloomsbury connections and standards. This seems to me quite wrong. The fundamental difference between Bloomsbury and our generation is that Bloomsbury went to France for its culture. We went to Germany to shed our inhibitions. Putting the matter frivolously, but I think quite decisively: we never slept with anyone who was 'Bloomsbury'.

Frivolity in fact comes in. One reason why this survivor feels a bit ashamed at the National Portrait Gallery is that the starred young writers of the period, though dedicated as regards their writing, were not quite serious when it came to participating in any kind of action. John Cornford's slightly later generation was serious in a way that ours was not. Ours sniggered through committee meetings of the Group Theatre and considered its self-infatuated, gifted director, Rupert Doone, something of a joke. In a sentence of a letter to Anthony Blunt (at the exhibition), Louis MacNeice wryly apologises for writing 'too much of the farcical in these days of serious socialist poets'. If he is referring to any of 'us', the reproach seems scarcely justified – an example of Louis's kind of showing off. His contributions to *Letters from Iceland* seem to show that he did not consider his travel companion Auden, nor their colleagues at home to whom they sent letters, over-serious socialists. Auden did of course sometimes write with intense seriousness, sometimes even out of a deep sense of public commitment. All the same, he never ceased, when he was in America, to complain that Americans would insist on taking him seriously. In the name of his religion he would object that poetry, being a game, was never serious. He also asserted that the political state of the world would be exactly the same if Shakespeare, Dante and Goethe had never lived. Of course there is seriousness behind all these assertions, but it is a kind of seriousness into which frivolity enters as a weapon for the defence of poetry as a means of the individual poet communicating with the individual reader, against those who wish to make it public utterance.

In the face of reproaches from Orwell, Cornford, Caudwell and others, one cannot then defend these young Thirties' writers from the charge that they were frivolous. One might, however, defend frivolity itself and thence arrive at the rather surprising conclusion that what makes Auden, Day-Lewis, MacNeice, Spender and Isherwood perhaps in the end the most representative of the writers of the decade was their frivolity as much as their seriousness. Frivolity provides the clue to the continuity of a generation which began by deriding the stuffiness of an England where customs officials searched the baggage of home-coming travellers for pornographic literature, prime specimen of which was *Ulysses*; where to be a respectable middle-class citizen usually meant upholding the virtues of the British Empire and decrying sex; where public-school and ruling-class attitudes could be classified by the young poet Auden, who had read Freud and Groddek, as neurotic symptoms. Members of this generation, having travelled to Germany to rid themselves of inhibitions, returned to an England where their liveliest sympathies were awakened by the unemployed. As Auden and Cuthbert Worsley have pointed out in their writings during the Thirties about English education, this generation had anti-fascist attitudes instilled into it through the experience of repressive behaviour by the authorities at public schools.

Although we were anti-fascist and communist sympathisers we believed in the independence of the artist, the detachment from the world of action of the work of art, even when the artist himself was involved in active politics. Samuel Hynes traces with understanding the history of the way in which Auden, by arguing that poetry was 'parabolic' – presenting situations from which the reader might draw conclusions in the world of action but, as art, separate from those conclusions – resisted claims that he should write poetry that was propagandist. Hynes goes on:

> When the Marxist critic D. Mirsky wrote of Spender in 1936 that he was 'gripped by an obsession – the obsession of the "independence" of the artist, of the necessity for him to fight shy of all party allegiances for fear of forfeiting his inner freedom', he must have thought that he was exposing a profound critical thought . . . But it might also be said that all he was really doing was accurately describing the idea of the artist that then prevailed among young English poets. Of course Spender argued that position; but so did Auden, so did Empson, so did MacNeice, so even did Day-Lewis – it was a central part of their literary heritage.

A slightly younger generation of writers – that of Cornford and Caudwell – who came of age with the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, saw the necessity of action as so urgent that they came to regard the obsession with personal freedom of the older generation of 'Young Writers', as the expression simply of their middle-class self-interest, covered up by their self-deluding defence of their freedom of self-expression. This younger generation produced the English writer-heroes of the Spanish Civil War, men like Julian Bell, Caudwell and Cornford, who solved the problem of loyalty divided between literature and action by immersing themselves, with some sense of relief, in the life of action in which they accepted more whole-heartedly than Auden had done in *Spain*, the reality of the propagandist lie and the 'necessary murder'. Thus Bell wrote:

> I can't imagine anyone of the NEW STATESMAN doing anything 'unfair' to an opponent . . . Whereas for my own part . . . I can't feel the slightest qualms about doing anything effective, however ungentlemanly and unchristian, nor about admitting to myself that certain actions would be very unfair indeed . . .

and he ends the same letter:

> I don't feel, myself, as if I could ever be satisfied to do nothing but produce works of art, or even nothing but lead a private life and produce works in the intervals.

We can now see the kind of regimes which result from the acceptance by intellectuals who plunge themselves into political activism, of the idea of the use (by their virtuous side) of the evil means used by their evil opponents. Yet we can judge men like Cornford and Bell only by their actions. For we do not know whether or not they would have modified their political attitudes had they survived the Spanish Civil War.

The selected 'Five Young Writers of the Thirties' of the National Portrait Gallery Exhibition fit into their role of being representative of this decade, not because they experienced the truth of its most terrible realities but because over the whole ten years they experienced its public and private life in a variety of ways which they reflected in their work and towards which they took up attitudes. Samuel Hynes makes it clear that the outstanding nature of Auden's achievement lies in the fact that through his parabolic art he was able to grasp a continually shifting situation, analyse it, shape thoughts in poetry about it, where the others of us were reflecting events and expressing personal emotions about them. The two greatest poems of the time are probably Auden's *Spain* and Louis MacNeice's *Autumn Journal*. These stand at opposite extremes. In *Spain*, Auden used an imagistic technique to apply the Marxist dialectic to imagining almost impersonally the struggle between past and future. In *Autumn Journal*, MacNeice responded to public events by placing them against his private passions and idiosyncratic personality.

David Caute

Last Tanguy

Revolutionaries Without Revolution by ANDRE THIRION translated by Joachim Neugroschel *Cassell* £6.50

If Greta Garbo had married Jack Dempsey the coupling would not have been more improbable – I refer to the bizarre wedding which occurred in 1925 between the philistine brutalists of the French Communist Party and the gilded aesthetes of the Surrealist movement. The Stalinists resembled a psychotic puritan prize fighter haunting the brothels in search of *putains* who could be disciplined when they proved irredeemable; while the bourgeois rebels of the Surrealist movement, for their part, longed for the calloused paws and the blue chin of a real man. It was not long before tender breasts and buttocks were covered in welts.

This is the episode which is central to André Thirion's long and rather self-indulgent autobiography, and brilliantly he relates it. An 18-year-old bourgeois from Baccarat in Lorraine, he became a junior participant and privileged spectator to the marriage when, fired with admiration for André Breton and Louis Aragon, the twin luminaries of literary Surrealism, he too joined the PCF in 1925, oscillating between the dedicated and poverty-striken (once papa cut off his allowance) life of a Party militant working in the proletarian quarters of

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Issy-les-Moulineaux, and the exotic fraternity of 54, rue du Château, where he rubbed shoulders with Marcel Duhamel, Yves, Tanguy, Michel Leiris and a succession of mistresses in the proverbial Parisian tradition. Meanwhile the great Breton, sensitive, kind, generous, haughty, intransigent and in much need of quarrels, held court on the rue Fontaine and in assorted cafés of Montparnasse – most notably the Café Cyrano.

At that time it was still possible to believe in a synthesis of Marxism and modernism, to discern in the Bolshevik revolution the same spirit of radical renovation that inspired Symbolists, Dadaists, Expressionists and Surrealists. Although Babel, Yesenin and Pilniak had already fallen into semi-disgrace in Russia, their works were being eagerly translated as flowers of the Revolution; when Mayakovsky came to Paris with no French and sad, love-reddened eyes, the heroic coupling of the deed and the word came with him; and the great reputation of Meyerhold and Stanislavsky, as masters of theatrical innovation, added further lustre to the image of the Revolution. Little realising that their dazzling creativity was about to be condemned, banned and locked away in the vaults, the Russian Constructivists were regarded with awe and enthusiasm by post-Cubist circles in France.

One must also understand the particular lineage of the French Surrealists themselves (although, spitting in the face of history and delighting in clean breaks, they refused to regard themselves as anyone's children). Essentially the post-war Surrealists inherited, via Tristan Tzara and the short-lived Dada movement, the passionate iconoclasm of the quasi-anarchist writers associated with the magazines *Les Entretiens politiques et littéraires* and *En Dehors*, notably Stéphane Mallarmé and Octave Mirbeau. Inevitably, for some years after the first world war it seemed as if the barrier separating the Surrealists from the communists would prove insurmountable, not merely because the Surrealists distrusted all politics and politicians, but more particularly because the Surrealists, rejecting the materialist view of socially determined intellectual life, noisily proclaimed the autonomy of the truly liberated *esprit*. The Surrealists, in fact, believed that the authentic revolution originated in the dreams, fantasies and free associations of an artistic elite.

Disgust aroused by *la guerre du Rif* in Morocco hustled the café rebels into the arena of politics. Completely naïve about the true course of events in Russia and about the doom of Trotsky, and convinced that a Party shrinking so rapidly as the PCF must be authentically revolutionary, a number of leading Surrealists took the plunge. Breton's review *La Révolution surréaliste* changed its name to *Le Surréalisme au service de la Révolution* – and the Party's muscle men began to saliva at the prospect of a sound, disciplinary beating. Five times Breton was hauled before the Control Commission to explain why a communist should also call himself a Surrealist.

As with so many good stories whose nasty outcome we can predict, we want to know how and where the fatal shots were fired. Thirion tells it well, in absorbing detail, bringing Breton, Aragon, Paul Eluard and Georges Sadoul vividly to life and drenching his narrative in gorgeous detail about money, food, sex, drink, vanity, jealousy – and sheer artistic talent. Here was a loose but fast-spinning galaxy whose stars included Man Ray, Dali, Buñuel, Max Ernst and Miró. Hovering on the fringes, rich and hot in bed, were ambitious, calculating ladies such as the extravagant bohemian Nancy Cunard, mistress of Louis Aragon until Elsa Triolet made him her own; *she* died in Paris later, ravaged and utterly alone, while Aragon turned his back with the remark, 'People must know how to die'.

Few portraits can match the richness and plausibility of Thirion's depiction of the cool, evasive and ambitious Aragon, who went to a Proletarian Writers' Congress in Kharkov in 1930 and promptly bowed to *force majeure* by disowning Breton and the Surrealist heresy, thus launching a career as the Great Writer of French communism, in the course of which he managed to betray almost every gift and sensitivity he possessed. Of course Thirion's retrospective account is not free of jaundice, since he himself seems to have drifted into Gaullism just at the time (1947) when it most closely resembled neo-fascism, and there is a visible chip on his shoulder about having subsequently encountered Aragon only once in 40 years. But the salad is none the worse for a touch of vinegar.

Oxford University Press are delighted to announce that the 1975 Library Association Kate Greenaway Medal goes to Victor G. Ambrus for *Horses in Battle* and for *Mishka:*

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'Between soldier and steed there has always been a special relationship of trust and love and it is good to see a book dedicated, for a change, to the horse rather than the rider.' *The Soldier*

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'It is tempting to quote at length in an attempt to give the flavour of this book, and a hint of its variety, but it is more sensible to urge others to read it too. *The Trouble With Donovan Croft* has rare quality.' *The Children's Book Review*
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Books for children and young people

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James Fenton

In the Squirrel Cage

John Ruskin: The Argument of the Eye by ROBERT HEWISON *Thames & Hudson* £7.50
Oscar Wilde by H. MONTGOMERY HYDE *Eyre Methuen* £6.95

Who said: 'For myself, I am never satisfied that I have handled a subject properly until I have contradicted myself at least three times'? Oscar Wilde? No, John Ruskin. It is difficult at first sight to imagine Ruskin and Wilde together. They seem to belong to different aspects of the 19th century. Yet Wilde was Ruskin's admiring pupil at Oxford; he worked with Ruskin on the Hinksey Road project ('Our enemies and our friends came out and mocked us at our work, but we didn't care much then, and we don't care at all now!') and professed to have spent his happiest hours at university in Ruskin's company. Both of them won the Newdigate prize. Both died in 1900 – Ruskin after long periods of madness, Wilde brought down by drunkenness and disease. Ruskin had been respectable to the point of impotence. Wilde had been all for kissing teenage seminarists 'behind the high altar'. And yet it could be said that their century rejected both of them: it revered Ruskin, but thought him a crank; it laughed at Wilde, then laughed with him, then cast him into outer darkness.

Here are two very different books. Robert Hewison takes Ruskin's thought as his subject, and allows only such biographical material as is strictly relevant to his argument. Yet what emerges from a well-written and beautifully produced book is a picture of the man's life through his thought. Ruskin begins as a critic of the picturesque. His doctrine of truth to nature makes him at once a religious, a scientific and a socially critical observer:

> The lower picturesque is eminently a heartless one; the lover of it seems to go forth into the world in a temper as merciless as its rocks. All other men feel some regret at the sight of disorder and ruin. He alone delights in both; it matters not of what.

The peasants that adorned the landscapes of his time were to Ruskin real people, paying a bitter price for the pleasure their poverty gave to the connoisseur. Writing from Italy, he describes how he came upon a child lying asleep on a pavement in Bologna, and how he pulled up immediately – not in pity

> but in delight at the folds of its poor little ragged chemise over the thin bosom – and gave the mother money – not in charity, but to keep the flies off it while I made a sketch.

As Ruskin's ideas develop, and his Evangelical belief drops out, leaving its method and symbolism behind it, this dark side of Ruskin's perception takes over. He sets himself against the economics of his day. Like Wordsworth, he loses the glory of his former vision. He sees London as a society of caged animals, with Hyde Park as the wheel in a squirrel cage, in which the animals take their exercise. He sees a cloud form over the city, a cloud which

> looks partly as if it were made of poisonous smoke. Very possibly it may be: there are at least two hundred furnace chimneys in a square of two miles on either side of me. But mere smoke would not blow to and fro in that wild way. It looks more to me as if it were made of dead men's souls – such of them as are not gone yet, where they have to go, and may be flitting hither and thither . . . You may laugh, if you like. I don't believe any of you would like to live in a room with a murdered man in the cupboard, however well preserved chemically; – even with a sunflower growing out of the top of his head.

I found this a striking book, an ideal introduction to some difficult and unfamiliar arguments. Ruskin is a somewhat baffling figure because his work breaks down what we consider the normal categories of criticism. This work provides a way in.

Oscar Wilde on the other hand needs no introduction. Or does he? After ploughing through Montgomery Hyde's biography, and reaching a point where I could stand no more of Wilde's sordid and tedious friends, I turned to the collected works and read 'The Soul of Man under Socialism'. At once, a different Wilde appeared – more passionate, more intelligent, more damning about the world than one would have supposed possible from this life. The essay is paradoxical, but the paradoxes have more point to them than the bits of repartee lovingly collected by his friends. Wilde may be an uneven writer, a by-way of literature. But how come this by-way managed to write one of the few, and best, accounts of what socialism would actually be like? 'The Soul of Man under Socialism' was once sold in Russian and Chinese translations in Nishni-Novgorod. Today anyone who spoke out for it in Russia or China would receive very short shrift and a very long period of detention. The essay is also unique in putting forward the only funny argument for the abolition of private property.

And it contains a clue to the enigma of Wilde's life – how so much talent produced in the end so little:

> Most personalities have been obliged to be rebels. Half their strength has been wasted in friction. Byron's personality, for instance, was terribly wasted in its battle with the stupidity and hypocrisy of the English. Such battles do not always intensify strength; they often exaggerate weakness.

In all the accumulated detail of Mr Hyde's book, there is only one attempt to assess Wilde as a man, and that is when the author argues that Wilde was not immoral, only amoral. This is quite untrue. Wilde was intensely moral, but the battle between his morality and that of society did indeed exaggerate his weaknesses. He became exhausted on the squirrel cage wheel.

James Kirkup

One-Line Poems

My life: a succession of inspired mistakes.
I have a voice like expensive scent.
Only weak voices speak cruel things.
An army marches on its sexual organs.
Salome put John the Baptist's head in the icebox.
My foreskin is a withered rosebud.
I combed a seagull out of my pubic hair.
When I unzipped my trousers, smoke poured out.
From my crotch rises a stream of dreams.
I caught cold at Wordsworth's grave.
I was taken short at Swift's tomb.
Poems explode in my mouth like liqueur chocs.
My poem is a hijacked time-bomb.
I use my own head as a pillow.
I posted my right hand in the letterbox.
When I blew my nose, my head fell off.
The Mona Lisa has a wooden leg.
I want to be the last man on the moon.

John Naughton

Elementary

Gifts of Unknown Things by LYALL WATSON *Hodder & Stoughton* £3.95

The allegedly benign properties of ill winds, like those of patent medicines, are widely advertised but rarely experienced. The recent adventures of Dr Lyall Watson, however, constitute a notable exception to this rule. It seems that while sailing on the high seas, Dr Watson's 20-ft yacht was struck by a typhoon which almost cost him his life, but which also provided him indirectly with the subject matter of his latest book. The storm drove him onto a small volcanic island in Indonesia where, having been made welcome by the natives, Dr Watson resolved to stay for a time. He remained there for an undisclosed period, repaying the hospitality of his hosts by doing some schoolmastering, and all the while observing and recording their communal life in the time-honoured fashion

PENTHOUSE
regrets that it's advertisement in last week's issue inadvertently stated that an article on 'Invisible Government' appeared in the current issue. This article in fact appears in the August issue of Penthouse on sale from July 15th.

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of all our amateur anthropologists.

Gifts of Unknown Things is a record of some of the strange things that Watson saw, or thought he saw, on that little island, interwoven with his attempts to impose a framework of 'scientific' explanations on them. He observed the habits and customs of the islanders sympathetically and has built up a selective but highly evocative picture of their lives. In particular, he describes activities like water divining and dowsing; the great part played by religion and ritual in the lives of the people; fishing and planting the rice crop; harvesting; special festivals and celebrations; the importance of dancing as a means of expression; and the belief that all objects and people can possess *segamat* – the 'essence of life'.

Like many other Western observers of remote communities, Dr Watson was struck by the extent to which the islanders seemed in tune with their environment. Indeed he goes further with a suggestion that the people of Nus Tarian – the fictitious name he adopts for the island – actually resonate somehow with their natural surroundings. They are therefore, he says, much less divorced from nature, and things which conventional science would regard as impossible are seen in the community as being perfectly normal, everyday occurrences. Many of the paranormal phenomena described in the book centre on a young girl called Tia who appears to possess all kinds of strange powers, and Dr Watson's chronicle of her more spectacular exploits stretches the reader's credulity to breaking point and beyond. Specifically, Tia is credited with bringing a man, whom Watson himself certified as dead, back to life; curing a chronic schizophrenic; and inducing a fire in the community mosque by sheer will-power.

Now Dr Watson was trained as a scientist, and has not yet lost those intellectual reflexes which are painfully acquired during a postgraduate apprenticeship. So he makes vigorous attempts to present the weird, apparently paranormal, phenomena which he witnessed as being potentially explicable within the framework of conventional science. Thus, for example, the lure of certain mystical terrestial locations is explained in terms of aberrations in the earth's magnetic field; the eerie behaviour of squids is related to research in marine biology; and the phenomenon of precognition is dealt with by resorting to some of the wilder speculations of theoretical physicists on the nature of time and matter. It's all very ingenious, if a little desperate in places. But Dr Watson claims to have seen some things which even *he* cannot rationalise – chiefly among them the alleged feats of the girl Tia. In the absence of corroborating evidence, the reader is left here with nothing but unanswered questions. Was the 'dead' man really dead? Could the mosque fire have started accidentally? And how reliable a witness is Dr Watson? On this last question, his over-credulous attitude in the past towards Philippino faith-healers and so-called 'psychic surgeons' puts rather a blot on his track record. Some things, alas, are not as elementary as Dr Watson thinks.

Vieda Skultans

Doctor How

Psychiatry in Dissent: Controversial Issues in Thought and Practice by ANTHONY CLARE *Tavistock* £7.50 and £4.00

This book deserves to be widely read and carefully criticised. It is an elegant attempt to preserve the status quo in British psychiatry. Clare uses his considerable literary skill to produce an argument which is both beguiling and forceful; but despite the title it is far from controversial. It is bizarre that a work purporting to deal with contemporary psychiatry fails to discuss such key areas as the controversies between the rival schools of psychologically based therapies. Clare not only neglects the commonest psychiatric problem (namely, depression) but also fails to review adequately the commonist forms of treatment, namely the drug therapies.

His book is part of what seems to be a more general movement towards defending the medical model in psychiatry. It should console and reassure psychiatrists who feel beleaguered by conceptual enemies and a hostile public; and it will confirm them in their belief that no matter what the differences amongst themselves, they alone have the right pedigrees and skills to care for the mentally ill.

The first section of the book deals with conceptual problems associated with mental illness. Further chapters are devoted to schizophrenia, electro-convulsive therapy and psycho-surgery. The final chapters review the issue of compulsory commitment and the present state of the psychiatric services. Such a ragbag of issues detracts from coherence and cogency and, despite his considerable talents, Clare loses his way. He praises eclecticism but falls victim to its very weaknesses. The chapters on schizophrenia, ECT and psycho-surgery contain meticulous reviews of the literature and current state of research, but the findings he reports are monotonously inconclusive and pessimistic and he fails to draw any conclusions of a radical nature. For example, it might be argued that psycho-surgery should be discontinued until proper randomised controlled trials have been carried out.

Throughout the book Clare develops his ideas in terms of 'the medical model', but its precise nature is never made clear. Having attacked a number of alternative models of mental disorder, he ingeniously discloses his own loyalties:

> The medical model is an evolving one, in which scientific methods of observation, description and differentiation are employed . . . in which an illness is conceptualised as 'a process that moves from the recognition and palliation of symptoms to the characterisation of a specific disease in which the etiology and pathogenesis are known and the treatment is rational and specific' [Kety, 1974]. Such a process may take years, centuries even, and while many medical conditions have moved to the final stages of such understanding, others are still at various points along the way.

The medical model as presented here is a universal catch-all and a perpetually moving target which makes criticism impossible. Just as doctors suppose themselves to be all things to all men, so the medical model protects itself by embracing every conceivable position. It is no accident that Clare's ideal psychiatrist is 'someone with a solid foundation in medicine, the biological and behavioural sciences, who is able to cope with the intellectual isolation implicit in such a critical eclecticism'. Such overriding ambition is courting failure.

Given that he accepts the medical model, it is not surprising that the chapter on diagnosis is central to the book. It is curious that this chapter eschews consideration of the approaches of major psychotherapists to the problem of whether diagnosis is necessary for successful treatment. In attacking the psychotherapeutic model, Szasz is picked as its representative – surely a straw man if there was one. No mention is made of major figures such as Freud, Carl Rogers or George Kelly, each of whom saw the meticulous classification of symptoms as irrelevant to therapy. One suspects that Clare has never made an attempt to encompass these traditions because they confront the amorphousness of the medical model.

The author's unwillingness to come to grips with psychological approaches is particularly apparent in the final chapter review-

D. J. Enright

What the Martian Learnt from the Underground

That the female of the race dresses exclusively
In tights and bras and bikinis

That the male passes his life supplying
The female with a variety of liquids

(In which perhaps she swims in her bikini?)

That the creatures who inhabit the Underground
Belong to a mutant and debased species

They gaze blankly at the pictures
Occasionally they vomit.

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ing the psychiatric services. He emphasises the relative lack of funds in the psychiatric sector of the NHS and gives estimates of the number of psychiatrists needed to provide an adequate service. He does not consider that clinical psychologists have a legitimate role to play in providing therapy. Clare refers to research carried out by two psychiatrists, Pallis and Stofflemayer, who demonstrate a relationship between psychiatric treatment methods and social attitudes; but, while he acknowledges this research he never applies the finding to his own work.

C. H. Rolph

On the Bus

Law and Morality: A Reader edited by Louis Blom-Cooper and Gavin Drewry *Duckworth* £12.50 and £4.95

The man in the Clapham omnibus is a monument of homespun wisdom dreamed up by lawyers long before the EEC referendum. Lord Devlin, whose public controversy with Professor H. L. A. Hart is the genesis of this book, calls him 'an archaism familiar to all lawyers'. No one seems certain about his real inventor, but I argue for Sir Richard Henn-Collins, Master of the Rolls, who said in 1903 that 'the ordinary reasonable man' was the man on the Clapham omnibus. It may not have seemed very helpful at the time, the defendant in the case being the *Western Morning News*, whose public didn't go often to Clapham; but that bus passenger plays a vital part in this deeply interesting book, one of whose unevenly matched authors (and it's maddening that you can't be *quite* sure which one) says on page 3 that

> half a century of Freud, and the work of social and clinical psychologists over the latter half of that time, have cast serious doubt on the reality of the man who travels daily on the Clapham omnibus, unaware of the exalted status accorded to him by the legal fraternity. Under the skin of the real man lurks a whole range of repressed feelings and concealed prejudices in which rationality often faces an unequal struggle. In this respect lawyers have signally failed to emulate the economists who abandoned, as of dubious utility, the concept of economic man.

Clapham omnibus man, nevertheless, comes rather well out of this anthology of law and morals; serving sensibly on juries, cocking a sceptical eye on the history of morals, weighing the pros and cons of paternalistic law, keeping his head when all above him are banging the drums of doom. Well, nearly all. This book would be worth having for one thing only – the speech of Mr Jeremy Hutchinson QC at the Old Bailey in The Running Man Press case, reported by Dennis Barker in the *Guardian* on 13 March 1971. For the thousandth time it had been said, on this occasion by Judge King-Hamilton, that 'as a historical fact' it was known that 'Rome fell because of many years of decadence and immorality'. On the contrary, said Mr Hutchinson, it wasn't permissiveness that brought the Roman Empire down. 'It was something more important, something called Christianity.' Was the Roman Empire something we should all have wanted to preserve – people held in bondage without any rights, without any freedom? It was a bloody tyranny; and if it was obscenity and permissiveness that laid it low, then three cheers for them both.

The questions raised in this book are prompted by the view of the law which, at long last, begins to appreciate the relevance of philosophy and the social sciences. They are also prompted by Bernard Crick, who, having persuaded Louis Blom-Cooper and Gavin Drewry to compile the book, wrote a deliberately (and refreshingly) provocative preface for it, a perfect aperitif. (He should have finished the job and made them provide an index.) And as a compendium on the legal enforcement of morality it could have been dedicated, in words that appear on page two, to 'the dissidents and misfits of a byegone age who have had the foresight to anticipate a subsequent moral trend'.

Moral duty and the utilitarian trend were bound to bring John Stuart Mill frequently into these chapters (on punishment, sexuality, family and fecundity, sanctity of human life, obscenity, religion); from his hypothesis that 'a runaway slave by the laws of slave-owning countries commits a theft – he steals his own person from his lawful owner', to the concept that 'the grandest results for the human race may depend on the public assertion of one's convictions at the risk of death by torture'. No account of the debate on 'mercy killing' would have been complete without Lord Segal's unforgettable speech in the upper House in 1969, describing how 40 years earlier, as a junior hospital doctor, he had been left in charge of a 'straightforward labour', to deliver what the chief obstetrician had mercifully ensured would be a dead baby and, 'to everyone's horror the macerated foetus began to cry'. He drowned it before the mother came out of her anaesthetic. 'Luckily all the nurses understood,' he said, 'and after their initial dismay, they acquiesced in what was done.' What if they hadn't? A murder charge? The practical realities of euthanasia will never be brought under satisfactory control by statute.

Nor, I believe more strongly than ever as a result of reading this book, will the problems of literary and artistic censorship. As to which, it is in fact disturbing that a book so obviously authoritative and scholarly should wrongly present the legal/moral dilemma in the chapter headed *Obscenity and Pornography*. In the *Well of Loneliness* case in 1928, for example, Desmond MacCarthy was *not* asked by Norman Birkett whether the book had any literary merit (which he privately thought it had). This would have been, even in 1928 and even in 1828, a perfectly proper question inviting a legally admissible answer. He was asked: 'Is this book obscene?' and, quite rightly, as the law was and still is, the magistrate stopped him at once, also sending away the other 29 distinguished witnesses who were there – said Birkett – to answer the same question.

Similarly the 34 witnesses in the *Lady Chatterley* trial in 1960 were *not* asked whether the book was obscene but whether they thought, obscene or not, it would be good for the public. But one outcome of getting all this material between two covers is that one is compelled to reassess such statements as Professor Hart's that 'there is no evidence to support, and much to refute, the theory that those who deviate from conventional sexual morality are in other ways hostile to society'. I suppose it depends on what you mean by conventional, but on my definition that simply is not true.

This is a much longer book than it looks; and needs to be if it is to justify such a price for only 260 pages. This it does by means of 'nine-on-ten' Baskerville type, and it ought to be sold like the two-volume OED with a powerful magnifying glass. But the tiny print makes you read it carefully and thus it not only gets, but thoroughly rewards, the grim concentration it deserves. A truly memorable compilation.

David Leitch

AYM

Traitor to India by SASTHI BRATA *Elek* £4.95

Had he been around north London in the Fifties, Sasthi Brata would have been, I swear, an Angry Young Man. As I write I can almost see the surplus stores black sweater, the shaggy, existential ears. In fact he left India too late to join this Anglo-Saxon movement; yet almost miraculously, as in a time warp, he has preserved much of the voice, the attitudes, and above all the cultural references.

> The interface between Reality and Illusion . . . has been the obsessive hunting ground for saints, novelists and poets all the way from Aquinas and Dostoevsky down to Hesse, Caudwell and myself,

he writes in a superlatively ill-judged prefactory note. That 'and myself', those names worn like cultural medal ribbons, where have we heard them before? The answer is early Colin Wilson, the 'Outsider' period of two decades ago when the angry sage accorded interviews to reporters from his tent on Hampstead Heath – also, oddly enough, Mr Brata's chosen turf.

Eliot, Kafka, Connolly, the sacred names of post-war literature courses, splatter Mr Brata's pages with their pillaged epigraphs, reinforcing the period flavour. It is not simply the choice of names but the way they are paraded which is so reminiscent of that literary Wilson era. For cultural name-dropping in those days, with higher education harder to come by, was used to remind the audience – as well as the dropper himself – that a new personality had been constructed, a new cultural terrain conquered.

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The old culture which had been left behind was very often provincial or working-class or both, but one thing was for sure: it was a world where T. S. Eliot, say, was a name that buttered no parsnips. Thus lurking behind the polemic, often conducted in the most abstract if passionate terms, one invariably found a deep and personal theme. It was the rejection of parents and home.

Mr Brata has been through the same mill; since he was a Hindu brought up in Calcutta the disparity between the culture he boned up from books and the one he left behind was naturally even wider. Rejection, severance, betrayal and guilt, like a black magician in the wings, here is the leitmotiv of *Traitor to India.* Not one that emerges at a first glance, it should be added. For though the author has broken his work into sections, with titles like 'The Condemned Playground', no doubt in a despairing effort to impose some shape, it remains a terribly uneven hodge-podge. However, a kind of overall process rather than a narrative emerges, beginning with the best thing in the book: an account of his mother's death in Calcutta, and the strict Brahmin upbringing she tried to impose on her adored son.

For our native Fifties rebels the celebrated dichotomy was the result of long library hours at the BM or in some white-tile university. Brata's *alma mater* was Presidency College, Calcutta, in the days when it was still known as 'the Balliol of India'. He could never return to the Brahmins. Instead, victim almost of a geo-cultural joke, he set off with *The Unquiet Grave* in his pocket, to be washed up on the unreliable shores of Hampstead bohemia. He had fallen in love with an anachronism.

An extremist by temperament, he had to take the process as far as it would go: not just exile, but banishment. Hence the 'traitor' in the title. This was the word used by Mrs Gandhi and some Congress MPs when they read a *Guardian* article Brata wrote after the State of Emergency. Naturally it enraged him. Yet it is clear from the book that his course, consciously or otherwise, drove him towards complete severance, from the maternal Hindu world initially and ultimately from Mother India herself.

Any such loss of roots is sad. It becomes sadder when he writes about his drear new world of art and bars – the former being interpreted pretty widely, incidentally, since disaffiliated PR men, unfrocked priests and a bloke who once had a vitamin shot from Francis Bacon's doctor are all welcome as Creative People The rigour is reserved for the booze.

Brata's book demonstrates, mercilessly almost, that he is at his (excellent) best on home territory – by which I mean Calcutta, not N.W.3. – and at his (execrable) worst the moment he moves into sub-Ginger Man north London *reportage.* He even loses his voice. The travellers' tales from the Heath, the endless saga of a hunter home from Rosslyn Hill, have a relentless unawareness and the repetitive eloquence of a man in a bar who simply won't leave anyone, himself included, in peace.

Astonishing when the Indian writing is so deft and moving. It almost makes one wonder whether this angry, troubled journey has not been in the wrong direction.

Susannah Clapp

Household Words

How I Became a Holy Mother by RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA *Murray* £3.95
Equinox by LORNA PEGRAM *Gollancz* £4.25
The Childkeeper by SOL STEIN *Collins* £3.75

Ruth Prawer Jhabvala's last novel, *Heat and Dust*, was a skilful but not unpredictable book: a mixture of detail about present-day and British India, with a British narrator in command at all points, alert not only to landscape and the indigenous population, but also to the absurdities of her compatriots. It worked within a tradition, which helped it towards a Booker prize.

As the tone of the title indicates, her new book is a rather different undertaking. The stories which make up *How I Became a Holy Mother* are wittier, more surprising, and very fine. The fact that only two have English protagonists is liable to be taken as an indication of some morally superior (because more ethnically first-hand) stance; more important, it means that Mrs Jhabvala is released from the obligation imposed by alien narrators to touch on such standard themes as the heat or snobbery. She has more space to make finer distinctions; more time for making scenes as opposed to scene-painting.

And her scene-making is uncluttered and unhurried, ranging from an eccentric's small hut on a mountain top, through a prostitute's crowded room to the rich and unhappy house of a Bombay businessman, where 'uncle and niece sat staring at each other among the marble busts and potted plants, while the snores of the sleeping family lapped around them'.

Mrs Jhabvala does not strain to present some overall personal view of India. Her attention is always directed at particular actions and reactions which are modified but not overwhelmed by their surroundings. But though she never gives the sense that a cultural exercise is taking place, she manages, by focusing on specific, undweltonn gestures, to point to large areas of different experience. Women kneel in despair, sinking their heads onto their saris; feet and temples are massaged with eau-de-cologne in shuttered rooms; hours are spent drinking tea on verandahs. A mixture of grace and tawdriness in people and places – of mountains and a salmon-pink meditation hall festooned with flashing light-bulbs – emerges but is not used cheaply or patronisingly. Different styles and attitudes are allowed to co-exist – not unremarked, but without point-scoring. Several of these stories deal with women attached to or abandoned by unsatisfactory men. The cads are observed with some coolness: forcing his eyes to 'sparkle', one gallant enthuses to a more earnest ex-lover, 'All the discussions we had about our terrible social system. It was great.' But the irony is used to point to the men's limitations, not to any pathetic gullibility in the women, who appreciate the kind of vivacity which can enliven as well as gush. The reproving glances of outsiders are acknowledged as justifiable, but are rarely allowed the final say. These women may have been taken in, but they have also been taken, and charmed. Mrs Jhabvala has been praised for her 'compassion'. But though it's true that she deals sympathetically with adversities of temperament and circumstance, such acclaim can be misplaced. These stories never call upon sympathy before interest has been aroused, and this is in part what makes them so admirable.

The most striking feature of Lorna Pegram's new novel is its insistence on symmetry and correspondence. Clare Cartwright meets the son of an ex-lover on 21 March: daylight and darkness are of equal length. Simon, locked in battle with his father, is struggling out of adolescence; Clare, who has a recalcitrant daughter, feels her womanhood is on the wane, and is debating whether to settle for premature senescence at 46. Despite the difficulties imposed by larger-than-usual differences in jargon, and larger-than-usual family resentments, the couple spend the summer discovering the 'sweet indignities' and 'reticent pleasures' of each other's bodies. But continual reference to the handily-placed river ensure that tides and waxing and waning are kept in mind and as autumn approaches Clare gracefully and inevitably says goodbye to Simon.

A lot of attention is paid to the intricacy of 'the relationship', which begins to take on the character of a glowering but appeasable household god – imposing 'delicate hazards', eliciting 'arching gestures', demanding as sacrificial offerings any attempts at straightforwardness. This is not the first novel in which doubts about the capacity of language turn out to be prophecies. Characters are made to worry about the effect on their conversation of tone, gesture and inherited attitudes; the representatives of the younger generation are linguists; their parents favour body-language and spontaneity; all finally gather at a lecture on non-verbal communication. But what is actually being said frequently disappears under a battery of nuances.

Delicate hazards do not feature largely in *The Childkeeper*, a novel which begins by laying claim to sinisterness and ends in a welter of blood, guns and US cops. An apparently wholesome family, complete with parents whose names – Roger and Regina – chime in a manner rarely found outside novels, move into a large grand house containing a number of stuffed animals and a strong sense of its former owner. Roger is a banker and pompous: Regina is a Southerner whose grandfather told her never to lie; the children – nagged at for table manners and haircuts – smoulder, and are rapidly and extravagantly ignited by the visit of a bad young black who hasn't had their chances in life. Briskly surveying American nightmares and the mistakes and hardships to which parents are prey, Sol Stein avoids the sentimentalities which sloshed through his last novel; the insights aren't momentous, but he provides some good dialogue, and the basis for a creepy late-night movie.

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Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

On the Other Side

Blithe Spirit *Lyttelton*
The Three Sisters *Cambridge*
Signed and Sealed *Comedy*

As one who rarely burns replicas of people on 5 November, and has never danced the Helston Furry on the Feast of the Apparition of St Michael, I can hardly accuse Peter Hall of lacking a sense of occasion. But Coward's slight, engaging *Blithe Spirit* makes an odd choice for the new National Theatre's first home-grown production. More to the point, it's an odd addition to a season in which 20th-century British humour seems adequately represented by *Plunder*, 20th-century British inanity by Osborne's *Watch It Come Down*, and the remaining two offerings are not particularly adventurous or demanding. Confronted with the play last week, I felt that some time-warp had sucked me back to Shaftesbury Avenue in the lush, snug days before inflation, combined with competition from the subsidised sector, reduced the commercial theatre to a series of holes in an old, mouldering cheese. Eileen Diss's set, a complete entrance hall on the left of its living-room and a wisteria-covered outbuilding visible on the right, is vaster and more extravagant than the one Coward specified in his stage-directions – and who should promptly scamper in from the kitchen but a comic maid, 'yes'm' and 'no'm' at the ready? 'As you are not in the Navy it is unnecessary to do everything at the double,' scolded the lady of the house, and the audience laughed in the knowing, tolerant way of people only too familiar with the servant problem. It was as if H.M. Tennent had been reborn, full-blown, on the South Bank.

Coward tapped out *Blithe Spirit* in five days during the bleak spring of 1941: six weeks later it was produced, and ran for nearly five years. 'I am still wondering whether it was "important",' he wrote later, 'Only Time will tell.' Well, Time, inasmuch as I can speak for him, is certainly fascinated to find so light and carefree an attitude to death in a period when it was becoming clear that very many of the British would soon be with Elvira on the Other Side, playing cards with Ghengis Khan, swapping cracks with Joan of Arc. Time is reminded of that piece of quintessential Coward in *Private Lives*, the exchange in which Elyot assures Amanda that 'death's very laughable, all done with mirrors':

> Let's be superficial and pity the poor philosophers. Let's blow trumpets and squeakers, and enjoy the party as much as we can, like very small, quite idiotic schoolchildren. Let's savour the delight of the moment. Come and kiss me, darling, before your body rots, and worms pop in and out of your eye sockets.

On the other hand, Time feels that *Blithe Spirit* hasn't the dash, the style, the defiant bravado either of *Private Lives* or of *Hay Fever*, itself memorably revived by Olivier's National. Time admits that he might be more impressed if the present cast included comic talent of the calibre of Maggie Smith, Edith Evans and Robert Stephens, all admirable in that production 11 years ago. But Time is still convinced that the play is below Coward's best.

It presents us with an eternal triangle, whimsically adapted for the nonce: one of its sides is only selectively visible. Charles Condomine is encumbered with two wives, one bossy, corporeal and unable to see her rival, the other mischievous, ectoplasmic and in full possession of her sight; and, after three acts of parapsychological wrangling, he is glad to be rid of both. It is an original variation on some familiar dramatic geometry, and it brings with it the considerable bonus of Madame Arcati, the ra-ra medium who begins by materialising Elvira and ends by dematerialising both her and Ruth, dead in a rigged car-crash. But in practice it seems strangely repetitive and predictable. Joke A has Charles upsetting Ruth, who thinks the insults directed at Elvira are really meant for her. Joke B has Ruth helplessly haranguing the empty air, while Elvira smirks and mocks from the other side of the room. Joke C contrasts Madame Arcati's heartiness with Elvira's wayward sophistication, the old lady's medieval incantations with a 'ghostly spectre, ghoul or fiend' who, but for her cobwebby texture, might be vamping men over dry martinis. There are of course, others; but these seem to be Coward's main devices for extracting laughter from us. By the end of the evening most people will probably feel that his automatic squeezer has jollied their ribs long enough.

Perhaps I'd be less parsimonious in my praise if I didn't know the play pretty well. It hasn't the resources of wit or character to reward rediscovery. All the same, it has its moments, and there must be something wrong with a production that notched its loudest laugh, at any rate on opening night, when Charles asked Ruth if that morning's *Times* was interesting and she flung back a withering 'don't be silly, Charles'. The acting, if not up to that of *Hay Fever*, is pretty good, though Richard Johnson might do more to map out Charles's somewhat undefined character and Elizabeth Spriggs's Madame Arcati could well be less jaunty and more imposing without being accused of parodying Margaret Rutherford. Rowena Cooper makes a smug, busy Ruth, and Maria Aitken manages to be skittish, stylish, fly, elegant and most of those things Coward wanted Elvira to be. But Harold Pinter's production, for all its sensitivity and smoothness, lacks pace and crackle. He has, I think, sacrificed fun for a subtlety that simply isn't to be found in *Blithe Spirit*. You can't hope to strike buried treasure in a text that consists of topsoil.

No, wait. I was forgetting Jonathan Miller, an archaeologist of some resource, if that isn't too double-edged a compliment. He has directed some bizarre productions in his day, but he has never been less than stimulating, and the National has been careless to lose him. The more shame to its reinforced concrete if he now renounces the theatre altogether, as he swears he will. I have at the back of my mind his putative *Blithe Spirit*, which emphasises Charles's desire to be free of domineering Ruth, suggests that Elvira is a figment of his guilty imagination, and hints that it's he and not she who arranges Ruth's murder; but I daresay Miller would disavow it. What he can never disown, though, are productions of *A School for Scandal*, *Ghosts* and *The Seagull* so nearly definitive that I, for one, won't be able to confront the plays again without constantly harking back to them To these must now be added his *Three Sisters*, less a resurrected classic than a living organism, capable of growth and change Certainly, the production has burgeoned since I admired it at Guildford: the result, no doubt, of bringing together a cast accomplished, confident and trusting enough to keep introducing new intonations, new gestures, new implications. A skimpy audience, a boiling Monday night and electronic wails offstage did nothing to stale their variety. *This* is what should have opened at the National last week.

As for *Signed and Sealed*, the Feydeau revival at the Comedy – well, the prognosis can't be good for a production whose backers are reduced to emblazoning the theatre with the oddly suggestive headline, 'Carry On, Frenchie'. Desperation characterises the cast, too. Kenneth Williams, Peggy Mount and others seem out to establish Olympic qualifying times in such sports as picking up cues, snatching at lines, getting through speeches, and finishing the play. It doesn't make them funnier.

Television

Russell Davies

Shirt-Wasters

At the time of writing, the weathermen on all channels are still chuckling so weirdly over their charts ('Of course this spell must end *some* time, but from the moment we can't say when, wha wha wha') that one hastens to turn the TV off, for fear it will fry up the last of the usable oxygen. Besides, the steam rising from the viewer's own chest makes the picture look wiggly. In the world behind the screen, the newsreel shots of lumpish girls in sawn-off jeans slopping through public parks, and stoical Guardsmen pounding their blisters into the Buckingham Palace pavement, have been

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standard summer stuff; but the odd momentous change has been recorded, the odd sign of the Englishman's traditional moral decline under tropic skies. On Sunday's John Player League cricket match (BBC-2), umpires Alley and Jepson appeared *without their white coats*, the first time Jim Laker could remember it happening in a first-class match. 'Apart from yesterday', he added. The venerable umps did have the courtesy to sport dark ties, however, as did Bill Giles of the London Weather centre, when the News paid him a special call. Ties are BBC policy, he swelteringly implied, wha wha wha. Mr Clifton would not have been so temperate. (Remember Mr Clifton? Doyen of the mid-Fifties weathermen, and a most squally and tempestuous presenter, easily as changeable as his subject.)

On *Stop to Think* (BBC-2), however, Malcolm Muggerlugs went shockingly tieless, presenting to camera just a plain Gandhified shirtfront topped off by a face in which the vast tongue seemed to pant even more arduously than usual. Such thunder as lingered at the edges of this programme was stolen throughout by the young historian Simon Schama, whose boiling brain gave off ideas at precisely the rate this series requires, now that it has decided simply to impress the viewers rather than trawl the depths of their questions. The Brains Trust idea was the wrong one to resuscitate. The time for a rigorous new *Face to Face*, where an idea of the totality of an individual's attitudes can be extracted by a skilled interrogator unencumbered by postcards, is surely come again.

But in the great cyclical progress of things, only a fertility festival like Wimbledon (BBC) can be sure of its return. British players were soon chalking up more love than anybody, but no one seemed to mind much this year. A new, unembarrassable Jack Kramer appeared in the commentary box, cheerfully announcing the arrival of 'noo balls' where once he would have primly specified noo *tennis* balls. Otherwise his idiom was unchanged. 'Why Dan, if Illy keeps getting these unforced ayres off of Jimmy's serve, he might just close Jimmy out . . .' Dan Maskell's capacity for surprise at the brilliant shot seems miraculously to increase with the years. 'Oh I say' he will blurt, 'that really is a corking forehand.' But somebody has told him not to temper his enthusiasm with knowledge this year. I caught him censoring himself: 'I don't want to get too technical.' Whyever not? It's the only way we can learn. The new low camera was a debatable advance, I thought, but the production team's ingenuity in screwing the high camera round to peek at the distant but consistently vital matches on Court Umpteen, was to be admired. So was the industry of Harry Carpenter, though I must add my voice to the reforming chorus that wants Harry's Smile of Greeting modified, obscured or if necessary amputated. It's essentially a nervous response to the flashing-on of the camera light, which means there is a split second when we see Harry's normal and perfectly acceptable face before his sociable contortion sets in. The effect reminds one of those bad TV plays (and even good ones) where someone's electric light comes zonking on just a fatal half second after the switch is seen to be thrown. But we must forgive Harry everything in such a sad week for boxing. He treated John H. Stacey's inexplicably duff showing with tact, and was suitably saddened by Muhammed Ali's fairground antics in Japan.

Sunday offered the best variety of escape from sport. David Attenborough narrated a choice documentary in what the continuity department chose to introduce, in ringmaster style, as 'those cannibal craftsmen, the Asmat'. As happens in most programmes from the tribal world, one item of information – the fact that until recently the infant mortality rate was five out of six – threw out all one's calculations about leaving these folk in innocence etc., and set one wondering what truth there is in the proposition that the progress of civilisation is commensurate with the development of medicine. Certainly religion hasn't progressed much. The local priest explaining Christianity to the Asmat – 'You must be born again, not of your mother, but of water and the holy spirit' – sounded alarmingly like the tribe itself at superstition-time, yet he could have got away with the same text in Stoke Poges.

One's faith in medicine took a complementary bashing on *The Editors* (BBC-1), where Harold Evans and his henchpeople were seen preparing their now-it-can-be-told on the Thalidomide obscenity. Mind you, a good deal of the programme was given over to green-eyeshade-type melodrama: looming deadlines, hurried paste-ups of revamped copy, and – a nice touch of rushabout Thirties farce – overalled extras hurtling in and out of the Editor's office bearing outsize pot-plants. Why the panic was necessary it was hard to see, considering that all the facts had long been in hand and that the team had several days in which to graft their retrospective judgments on to their archive-work. Perhaps a few egos tripped over the cameras. Never mind; Evans's people were entitled to bask after a well-fought fight and, more to the point, the fussed-over article turned out to be an impressive piece of work. As did the film, directed by Brian James, who is obviously an enemy of programme-sag. They desperately need him over at *Second Verdict* (BBC-1), where Barlow and Watt recently managed to make even Lizzie Borden take-or-leaveable.

Light entertainment throughout the week was wildly variable, but mostly awful. On the *Vera Lynn Show* (BBC-2), Roger Whittaker breathed in more loudly than he sang. There was a new conjuring show from BBC Manchester, too appalling to name, so hopelessly did it strain after the quick-fire informality of Johnny Hamp's Granada shows. Much the best solo act of the week came in the old Paul Whiteman film *King of Jazz* (BBC-1), where Willie Hall not only played 'Nola' on the trombone at a breathtakingly high speed and register, but followed it up by playing rhythm violin in more positions than seemed musically possible, or medically advisable. The best cross-talk occurred in ITV's *State of the Nation*, an attempt to explore the possibility of achieving continuity of policy between governments of different ideals and emphases. The programme waffled on in the bantering, clubbable tone established by its chairman, Jo Grimond, until Lord Balogh came on to confront Sir Keith Joseph. With the veins wriggling at his temples, Joseph opened up with his perennial stuff about overspending, and promptly received the put-down professorial: 'I am not goink to give you an answer, because you oat to take a lesson in economics and then we could talk again. Thet is thet.' But by dint of vigorous cutting – the programme wore a shorn and jerky look – the backslapping mood was re-established. 'Well done Jo!' warbled Joseph as the credits rolled. The programme had been merely a victory for Westminster solidarity. The state of the nation, in fact, was better exemplified by the mid-programme adverts: two of them (for sun-glasses and savoury crackers) had a Wild West theme, silly in itself and even worse when duplicated like this within the space of a minute; and the third – this on the fourth day of the paint-peeling, umpire-stripping, Muggeridge-flushing weather – was for electric central heating.

Films

John Coleman

Lovelaced Out

Linda Lovelace for President *Soho Cinema, Brewer Street; ABCs Bloomsbury, Edgware Road and Fulham Road*
Bambi *Odeon, St Martin's Lane*
Lifeguard *Ritz*
Fairbanks Season *The Gate* from 4 July
Georgian Cinema *NFT* from 5 July

'Did you like *Blazing Saddles*?' asked the friendly presenter of *Linda Lovelace for President*. 'Yes.' 'Then you'll love this.' (It seems only fair to keep you *au courant* with the spicy little exchanges that go on between reviewers and distributors. It must get lonely out there. Nor will you have seen, nor – under the present dispensation of censorship – are you ever likely to see, Miss Lovelace's explicitly titled *Deep Throat*, which brought her fame as a sort of sexual sword swallower and its makers a small fortune in the States.) Yet somehow our current trustee of film morality, Mr James Ferman, has found time to let *LLfP* through, interrupting his itinerant series of lantern lectures to local authorities during which, reliable report has it, he is showing the ex-

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cised dirty bits from mostly low-grade stuff completely out of context. What Mr Ferman does is unfortunately *not* his own business, since it may well be spreading undue alarm among elected burghers and hence stifling at source any chance for the people's choice. Back to Linda, who is best described as barely an actress. She is quite comely and merry, with a flickering tongue and a naughty urchin's slipped grin. In a misdirected film (by Claudio Guzman), which would probably work equally well as a four-letter radio event (screenplay by Jack S. Margolis), she displays her prime assets in a couple or so simulated sex acts and all round – which is how the camera looks at her – appears to be having herself a ball, if not more. It is a shame her gusto, and that of her fellow-exhibitionists, is not more contagious. The only blazing saddle that came to mind was the one I sat on, your witness, a burning throne.

One understands, though, how the misconception may have arisen. A bold opening legend assures that what is to follow is intended to offend everyone and is soon pursued by a sick joke. 'Why do they put the meat on the altar at a Polish wedding? To keep the flies away from the bride.' Very well: Mel Brooks (of *The Producers* and *Young Frankenstein*, as well as *BS*, let us not forget) has his own way with bad taste: briefly, it entails questioning one's private holdings in the mannerly. It can even occasion re-assessment. Mr Guzman's very few icky good things, presumably to be ascribed to Mr Margolis, have to fight their individual battles against a dismally amateurish surround: there is a chattering chimp I would rather not enlarge on, son of a pelt-covered fellow who swings to a crash from the trees but recovers enough to do a third-form Tarzan parody on top of Miss Lovelace: there is a zombie called the Assassinator, summoned to perform his bumbling killing of the lady when she threatens to get that Presidential vote, and weenily funny as his jumbo sniper's rifle collapses on him, when he says, 'Bang bang, you dead'; there is a Chinee, who irons like mad on a cross country vote-catching bus and offers slant-eyed maidens with the slogan, 'With two, you get an egg roll', there is a swastika'ed chap, who paints *Adolf Loves Eva* over walls and a copulating back and is rewarded by the whole gang serenading him at a party thus: 'For he's a jolly good Nazi.' There is a strong case for politico-sexual fantasy, which – heaven knows – Philip Roth has planted out in literary pastures; Nixon rather wrecked matters by making the fantastic everyday; there is no case for one as brief as this. By now, history has outdone nightmare, even pastiche.

And, for once, my pun lies idle in its holster. What can you do when the object under discussion insistently chucks out its steady flak of dire *double-ententes*? Examples: Miss L.L. on TV, 'The bigger the job, the better I like it'; a revivalist priest, 'Oh, Lord, I'm coming,' at which the firmament booms down, 'If you're really coming, bring her with you'; a crooked party man taking offence at the phrase 'pulling ourselves together'. To lead with this botched effort may look like leading with a glass chin. However, it has apparently done well across the pond and our otherwise diffident censor has let it pass: could it be that a critic lies slumped in him, after all? My worst fear is that it will coin money over here. With more space, I would narrate its other three jokes, all essentially verbal, and save you from the 'liberated' antics of its images. There is, I should perhaps add, this odd element in it. Linda Lovelace – who, for all I know, is fashioned out of polystyrene – registers as relatively genial, the Prunella Stack of absurd erotica.

If the kids are too short to me smuggled into this, there is always *Bambi*, revived but a disappointment to these old eyes. Walt Disney had trouble with this one, released in 1942, five years after it was mooted. It grossed over a million dollars then and had cost over a million more. Subsequently, it has gone firmly into the black. Which brings one to a Disney quirk at the time of its making: 'I want black on black,' he is supposed to have said, when the deer Bambi, grown to full pubescence, had to lock antlers with a rival over his prospective mate, eyelash-fluttering Faline. The animators' answer still works: near-silhouettes lit with lightning flashes. There is also the forest fire and a strong ethical message against man, the killer. Disney demanded, on today's evidence, too great authenticity for the early pan across the forest and the movements of his deer at bay. He was told he might as well make it with real fauna and flora. And yet there is a rolypoly love-me quality assigned to the lesser animals: the rabbit Thumper, the skunk young Bambi christens Flower, the Lionel Barrymore wisdom of Owl, who resents spring and the 'twitterpated' mating that inevitably ensues. There is, alas, a very bad, heavenly-choir score, to boot or hoof or pad. It is very much an animation of fits and starts. Tougher connoisseurs of the genre should trot off to the ICA, 8 p.m., 7 July, when Jonathan Rosenbaum will be introducing a programme of Tex Avery cartoons, drawn from his strange, fruitful period with MGM.

Daniel Petrie's *Lifeguard* could almost as easily be a commercial for a male deodorant. It would do decently late night on telly with the temperature rising and the critical count at its lowest: as it is, at the Ritz, it is beneath discussion, if not reportage. Sam Elliott, a well-built, bronzed chap with a moustache plays Rick, a plus-30 happy in his beach job who is made to feel unhappy by an underage girl who seduces him and an ex-schoolmate, a divorcee, who runs a Californian art gallery. The older woman wants him to sell Porsches and double his income. He shows signs of deciding against. I think that covers the issues.

The Gate is broaching a full Douglas Fairbanks Sr season and there are a couple of astonishing shorts, both 1916, *The Habit of Happiness* and *The Mystery of the Leaping Fish*, in the second of which (directed by John Emerson and with a zany story by Ted Browning, of *Freaks*) Fairbanks plays a sub-Holmes reasonably called Coke Ennyday, who shoots up roughly every two minutes, while solving a plot I scarcely noticed. Bessie Love is beautifully in attendance. *The Black Pirate* (first Technicolor process film), *Robin Hood* and all will be displayed. In this connection, see a pair of books by Richard Schickel: *Douglas Fairbanks – The First Celebrity* (Elm Tree, £3.50), an astute study in the perils of making it early, and his coffin-table picture-collection with text, *The Fairbanks Album*, (Secker and Warburg £7.50), a sad and exhilarating flip-through. The Georgians from Russia make films, too, and should be worth the trip. If I fail to respond to Otar Yoseliani's *When the Leaves Fall* (1967), a piece about lads and lasses in Tbilisi, viewable on 12 and 13 July, it may be because the lad – trying to be honest in a corrupt wine-bottling plant and the flirty girl, tolerably moustached, are so unattractive. There is a lost flavour of good, one-time behaviour of small-town people, somewhere between the Fellini of *I Vitelloni* and the early Czech-based works of Milos Forman, that reads here like a faded carbon.

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Records

Wilfrid Mellers

Who Are Folk?

The Chieftains: 4 discs of Irish folk music *ILPS 9364 9365 9379 9380*
Music from Tonga, the Friendly Islands recorded by Lavinia A. Finau *Tangent 122*

Existing in a global village entails, for musicians as for anyone else, problems. If one lived in an African village, or an Irish peasant community, or in Bach's Leipzig, Handel's London, Mozart's or Beethoven's Vienna, one knew where one was and what one's values had been and either ought or ought not – according to one's reactionary or revolutionary proclivities – to be. Today, musicians have to live in many times and places simultaneously; dubiety, if not befuddlement, is a consequence. One perplexing manifestation is the folk music revival that has gained momentum over the past 50 years. If it began as a conscious attempt to salvage a vanishing oral culture, it's become in a sense anti-antiquarian, since young people now find in oral traditions an alternative to those moribund literate traditions that, in their inevitably half-baked view, 'enshrine' a power-addicted cultural monopoly. That the young should adapt the music of rural folk to their own urban needs, and should employ industrial technology to do so, is at once a negative

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and a positive gesture: negative in that it's a slap at the world that made them and in which they have to live; positive because the music may reaffirm values that haven't ceased to be basic because they've been forgotten. The problem is not whether they're 'relevant', but whether, given the conditions of our society, they can work.

The most potent source material for the folk music revival has come, naturally enough, from communities in which the music precariously survives – and still functions. For Britain, the most fruitful field has been rural Ireland, where ancient ballads are still sung in both Gaelic and English, and where a rich variety of instrumental music is played on whistles, fiddles, bagpipes, flutes, concertinas and percussion; very old, purely oral conventions shade off into semi-literate pop musics for dancing, and into semi-oral art musics such as the (almost entirely dispersed) bardic music for harp. As civilised interest in ethnic musics has grown, so these Irish folk musics have been disseminated by way of radio, disc and concert performance; and we've all found in the music delight, excitation, a pristine rebirth. Chief among the revivalists are the Chieftains: whose members originally played the music as oral folk artists creating 'music of necessity' for work or play or magical ritual, in the community they were born into; but who later studied and practised the music – especially its more sophisticated manifestations – under the aegis of a university. They've played together, semi-professionally, for 17 years, their first records, directed at a smallish local audience, being cut for the Dublin based Claddagh label. Now comes this set of four retrospective discs from a 'commercial' firm: which reflects the Chieftains' fame and professional status in the world at large.

Their celebrity is justified: the music is thrilling and the performances are virtuosic, for folk musics can and do imply their own high standards of expertise. None the less, there cannot but be anomalies in the presentation of such music: which was created to promote solidarity at social junketings, to console the bereaved, to assist physical labour, to lull and to charm, to beguile solitary sheep. Its techniques – which are melismatically decorative, incremental, non-developing and therefore a-temporal – are an incarnation of its functions: so how does one listen to it when, in concert or on disc, these functions are not operative? Of course bodies may sway to the rhythms of the dance, minds may be tranced by the ululations of lone pipers, and this activity and inactivity may both be claimed as a valid reaction to and against our post-Renaissance obsession with ego and will. Yet though this may be valuable, it *is* simulation; we can't be involved in the physical and metaphysical behaviour of this music as we can, for instance, be involved in jazz – the one semi-oral music of the 20th century that sprang from the stresses and distresses of our time. Because one cannot be thus involved, to listen, as a reviewer, to these discs in sequence is to degrade them; after a while the noise, however intrinsically lively, becomes background music, if not muzak. The answer, I suppose, is that one shouldn't so listen to them, but should take them in small doses. Then simulation becomes once more stimulation; the music may be part of our world because what's being 'conserved' makes for life. The evidence for this is that the sonorities and textures of the Chieftains' music have deeply affected some aspects of so-called progressive pop: which is really regressive, though not necessarily in a pejorative sense.

The music from the Tonga makes a fascinating, if depressing, foil to the Chieftains. The Irish music is vividly 'authentic', brilliantly performed, but is inevitably transmuted in being performed in conditions alien to its creation. The Tonga Islanders' music is recorded in the field, serves topical and local functions, and is even in part composed by the people's titular head, Queen Salote. Musically, however, it's an almost total denial of indigenous melodic and rhythmic traditions; what comes out is a mish-mash of Christian missionary music (*Hymns A. and M.*), of 19th-century European military marches and of American-Hawaiin muzak, high on coke, the Islanders' sole near-alcoholic beverage. Fortuitously, the melange may generate a guileless charm, especially in the Americanised bits; yet there's no disguising the fact that the musical conventions, being rudimentarily harmonic and metrical, are at odds with the corporeal and spiritual, as well as musical, values of the Tonga world. The Chieftains' music is, in the strict sense, admirable and marvellous but, in the conditions of our society, is dubiously functional. The Tonga songs function efficaciously, but are dubiously musical: so even their efficiency can be no more than superficial and temporary. One might claim that the Tonga need what modern civilisation offers if they are materially to survive, just as modern civilisation needs some of the qualities of Irish folk music if it is to survive spiritually. For the Tonga Islanders, however, the price seems heavy: how sad, how bad.

Weekend Competition

No 2419 **Set by Jethro B. Tucket**

Norman Marlow overpraised Houseman for writing to order a meaningful verse containing the words *hat, novel, banker, cucumber, yacht, abridgement* – in 16 lines! Our competitors know it could be done in six with *no* sweat. By 16 July.

Result of No 2416 **Set by Snubbin**

Asa Briggs: Sir Gas Bag. We wanted more anagrams.

Report **by Ed Jug**

There seems to be something sinisterly anagrammatical about the moniker of a certain Harold Wilson, Esq: in the past week I must have seen at least 200 different versions of his foul name. J. W. Tulloch, a wit who obviously has a fair amount of time on his hands, sent in a 45-line poem (adapted from the 'Pictish Tongue'), each line being an anagram of H.W. I bemusedly print three quid's worth below. Otherwise, 50p per anag. (postage inc.), and congrats.

War on sod hill.
O! warn ill shod
roll shin woad.
No raw hill sod
shall I word on
So draw on hill
sod on raw hill . . .
'Ah! no ill sword,
Iron shod wall!
o! I shall drown
in worlds halo,
rid all on show.'

J. W. TULLOCH

Denis Healey: Enid Eyelash. William Hamilton: I Will Not Hail, Man. Lord Montgomery: God! Try Rommel On!

R. S. WILSON

Richard Ingrams, Auberon Waugh, Nigel Dempster: Warning – Hard Men Harbour Grudges, Malice, Spite.

MIKE DAUB

Denis Healey: Heeds Any Lie. Reg Prentice: Price Regent. Peter Shore: Er, Post Here.

ADAM KHAN

Gregorie Yefimovich Rasputin: I'm Yogi, Having Cure For Spirit. Marcia, Lady Falkender: Fancy Me, Lar-da-dar like!

ANTHONY JARVIS

Reginald Maudling: In a Glaring Muddle. Harold Macmillan: I Charm All, Old Man.

DAVID PHILIPS

Vladimir Nabokov: Milord Vain Vokab. Rupert Murdoch: Dr Rump-Toucher.

A. BLUHM

Iris Murdoch: Horrid Music. Simon Raven: Rains Venom. Geoffrey Wheatcroft: Coy Toff Grew Fat Here.

EMMA FISHER

Thomas Bowdler: Bold *mot* Washer. Michelangelo Buonarroti: A mural, one ceiling, or both? Florence Nightingale: Fight gore! Clean lineñ!

JOYCE JOHNSON

Michael Parkinson: Spin a Charm Line – OK? John Stonehouse: O! Sue, Honest John.

D. G. BULL

Reginald Maudling: Rum Land-Deal in Gig. Norman Mailer: I'm *Near* Normal.

PAUL PASTOR

Gore Vidal: I Love Drag.

SUKY WOOD

Pam Ayres: Reams Pay.

J. HARVEY

Michael Heseltine: Heel! Is the Mace Nil?

SPENCER HAMIL

Simone De Beauvoir: O Sir! Mon Dieu! Be'ave!

GERRY HAMIL

Marjorie Proops: Poo! Mirror Japes. Johann Sebastian Bach: Ach, Best Ban His Joanna.

W. G. WRIGHT

Wystan Hugh Auden: Naughty Unwashed.

GEOFFRY WHEATCROFT

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Assiac

Chess Board

No 1388 **Hit or Miss**

Let's look at a miss first, a painfully missed opportunity; Langeweg-Ögard Dortmund 1975. / 2RKtr2k / 3ktlplp / p5pl / 6Q1 / 8 / 5qP1/ 5P1P/6K1/.

White played **Qd2** to guard against the mating threat; and after . . . **Kg8** White could make no progress and finally lost. He should have played Qe7!! instead (the lady being taboo on account of Kte6†), and Black would have been forced to take the perpetual by . . . Qd1† etc.

But here (reported by Prof. Michel in *Deutsche Schachzeitung*) is a healthy hit. Elm-Kohlschmidt Essen 1975. /2rlkbrl/p4p2/ qp2p2p / 4P3 / b2RB / B2 / P6P / 2P3PK/ 1Q1R4/.

1) Qb3!! Once again an untouchable lady on account of Bc6†!,b5; **2) Qd3,Be7; 3) Ra4:!**, and Black resigned in view of Qd7† &Bh6:† etc.

And now for a miss again, first round sensation at the Petropolis Interzonal in 1973. In Tan-Smyslov the practically unknown Singapore player had a clearly won position against the ex-champ after 23 moves. /r3q1k1/4ppb1/ bp4pl / p2pP3 / 2r4R / 2B2Kt2 / 1PPQ1PP1/ 1K5R/.

White played the unconvincing **24) Rh7**, gradually messed up the winning position and lost on time after 37 moves. What he missed while a good many grandmasterly eyes (including those of worried but pokerfaced Smyslov) has seen it was, fairly obviously, 24) Rh8†!!,Bh8:; 25) Rh8:††,Kh8:; 26) Qh6†,Kg8; 27) e6!! and either . . . Rc3: or . . . f6 would have failed against 28) Ktg5!.

In the same tournament Portisch when White against Reshevsky didn't miss a hefty hit in this position. /2rqrtk1/1p2p2p/3p1bp1/3P2B1/ 2P4Q/1P1B3R/6PP/5R1K/.

After **1) Bg6:!,hg:; 2) Rf6:!** Black resigned on account of . . . ef:; 3) Qh8†,Kf7; 4) Rh7†,Kth7:; 5) Qh7:†,Kf8; 6) Bh6††.

Finally, Reshevsky again. He isn't often in the role of the sucker, but here (White against Fine in New York 1941) he missed what would have been a splendid hit. /2R2Bk1/p2q1r1p/ 1p3ktpl/3plkt2/P2P1P2/5Q2/6P/2R3K1/.

In grievous time-trouble Sammy played **Bd6†** and after some blundering on both sides a draw was achieved after just over a dozen moves. Yet, White could have won brilliantly by 1)Qd5:!! since both . . . Qd5: and . . . Ktd5: allow Bh6† & ††. Nor could 1). . . Ktd6 or . . . Ktg7 save Black's game.

The 4-pointer for beginners is a game position in which White forced immediate resignation by one spectacular move. For 6 ladder-points **B** is a stalemate achieved in a mere four moves. Helpful hint: those Rooks are expendable. **C** (for 7) is a draw achieved in five moves, either by stalmate or perpetual. Helpful hint: It starts with a veritable sacrificial orgy. Usual prizes, entries by 12 July.

A: Katalymov-Kolpakov Riga 1975: /k7/ p4rlR / 1ktp2q2 / 2Ktp2pl / 3P4 / 1P1QP3/ 5P2/2K5.

B: V. & M. Platov: /16/7q/6p1/k2KR3/8/ bP6/5R2/.

C: E. Wolanski: /2k2b2/P5r1/4R3/5B2/ pKt6/K3ktq2/kt6r/3R3b/.

Report on No 1385 *Set 11 June*

A: Qf2!! makes stalemate inevitable.

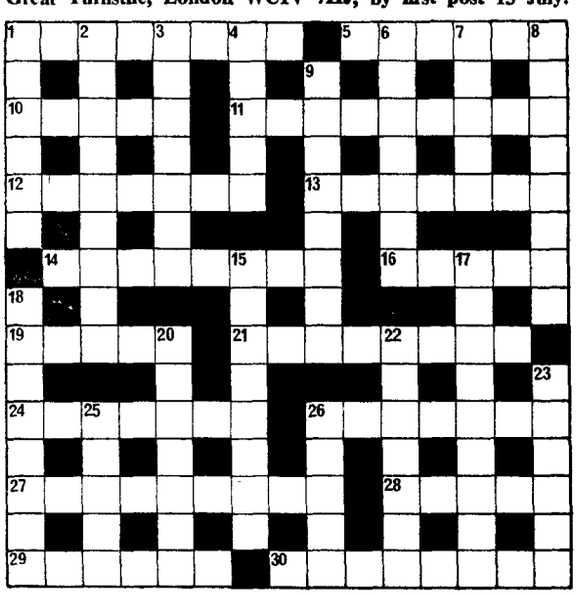
B: 1) Bb6†!!,cb:; 2) a7!,Ba7:; 3) Ktd6(thr.††),**Rb8; 4) Ka3!!**, etc.

C: 1) Bb4:,gh: Otherwise, of course, the P marches; **2) Be7!,h2; 3) Kte2** (thr. to stop the P), **h1=Q; 4) Ktc3†,Ka5; 5) Kb3!**, and if he averts Bb4†† by . . . b5 he is mated by . . . Bd8††.

Plenty of faultless entries. Prizes: D. E. Cohen, S. N. Collings, A. Houston, A. Schneider, S. Zeki, a newcomer and a most welcome female competitor once again. EG quarterly circle, meeting Friday July 2nd at 6.30 at 101 Wigmore Street. All welcome.

Weekend Crossword 1171

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1171, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 13 July.



ACROSS

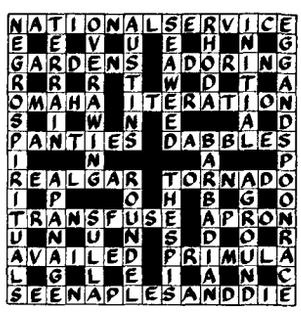
1. Good-looking sailors love me (8).
5. The heights of general supposition? (6).
10. Hidden thing which brings pain to child's head (5).
11. Capital weight for a schoolmaster (9).
12. Where one is not returning without a relative (7).
13. All mixed up, having the corner in the middle (7).
14. Not brave and so a nice hour is ruined (8).
16. A flower is set before us (5).
19. Cockney greeting to a town in Scotland (5).
21. Agreements show that revised rate is binding (8).
24. Landlady who turns red during a dance (7).
26. A lot of soldiers also included in the scheme (7).
27. Religious actions appropriate for Passover? (9).
28. Go on foot and catch about a thousand (5).
29. A prophet in his concern at handling the future (6).
30. I have a go at following a group in crime (8).

DOWN

1. Tom would be here if the goddess came endlessly (6).
2. 'In shadiest covert hid, Tunes her —— note' (Milton) (9).
3. Television character who has to walk with part of the foot (7).
4. Port suitable for celebrating an honorary degree? (5).
6. Learns freely about a magazine (7).
7. Furniture gives point to what a carpenter uses (5).
8. Like a devil I finish among watery creatures (8).
9. Word from piece of writing at bottom of page (8).
15. Literary hostess has Klemperer on the phone (8).
17. Produced by rapid bowing (9).
18. Part of weapon I preserve for the defence (8).
20. Complaint which puts spirit into the continent (7).
22. Wished good health, as in 'To the ex-PM' (7).
23. Quick although the observer is without sleep (6).
25. Rest thus in mountain climbing (5).
26. Dish which gives one an alpha for history? (5).

SETSQUARE

Solution to No 1169



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Further particulars should be obtained from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Appts), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF.

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Further details of position and application form may be obtained from **Clive Jenkins, General Secretary, ASTMS, 10-26a Jamestown Road, London NW1 7DT.**

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The Director is responsible to the Council, whose members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Industry, for the implementation and development of its policies and the management of its activities and staff. Suitable candidates are likely to have good qualifications and experience in at least one of the design professions, and/or in senior management in industry or commerce, or in an organisation comparable with the Council. They must be prepared to travel frequently at home and abroad and to represent the Council at high level. The preferred upper age limit is fifty, although applications will be considered from outstanding candidates above this limit. The present salary is £12,465. There is a contributory pension scheme, and other conditions of employment are broadly comparable with those of the Civil Service. Please write for further information and an application form (which should be returned not later than 23 July 1976) to the Chairman, Design Council, 28 Haymarket, London SW1Y 4SU.

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Vol. 92 No. 2363

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Theatres

CHICHESTER. 0243 86333. 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 July at 7.0, 1, 10 July at 2.0 'Twelfth Night'; 1, 6, 9, 10 July at 7.0 3, 8 July at 2.0 'Noah'.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE. 722 9301. Prevs to Sun. Inc. at 8 p.m. Opens Mon. at 7, subs 8 p.m. 'Sparrowfall', by Alan Drury.

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